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Liberal Values and New Commonwealth Immigration:

1961 - 1981

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SUMMARY

Immigration to Britain from the New Commonwealth began in earnest in the late 1940s and the early 1950s. British governments, both Socialist and Conservative, found the issues raised by such immigration difficult to deal with. This is evident from the succession of immigration control and race relations measures in the period 1961 to 1981. These dates mark respectively the Parliamentary debates on what became the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act and the 1981 British Nationality Act. As such these measures delineate clearly the development of this major policy area. One of the noticeable features of this policy area is the recognition by participants of the existence and importance of values and attitudes characterised by the term "liberal". Such liberal values were commonly associated with opinion formers in a wide variety of institutions, but particularly amongst leaders of the Labour and Liberal Parties, the churches and government-sponsored race relations bodies. This study examines the values and attitudes of such people and suggests that several themes have been predominant in the liberal response to race politics. Five themes are identified and discussed: a social determinist view of human behaviour together with a desire for rationality, equality, pluralism and community. These themes are examined for evidence of any inconsistencies or conflict of values, both within themselves and in relation to each other. The purpose throughout is not to question or criticise such liberal values; rather it is to study any inconsistencies within them.

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DECLARATION

Papers based on versions of chapters two and four of this thesis have already been published. They appeared, respectively, as: 'Immigration Control: The Liberal Party and the West Midlands Liberals: 1950 - 1970', in Immigrants and Minorities, Vol. 3, No. 3 November 1984. pp 297-311 and 'The Churches: Immigration and Race Relations', in New Community, Vol. XII, No. 1, Winter 1984-5 pp 101-115. This second paper produced a critical response which is considered in 'The Churches: Immigration and Race Relations: a Reply to Kenneth Leech', in New Community, Vol. XIII, No. 1, Spring-Summer 1986, pp 109-110.

Introduction

I

Immigration from the New Commonwealth to Britain began in earnest after the end of the Second World War; slowly, but then in increasing numbers, immigrants from the Caribbean and from Asia settled in Britain.¹ During the late 1940s and much of the 1950s, this phenomenon produced a response in successive British governments and much established political opinion, of studied public detachment. However, as immigration increased, opposition to it began to appear amongst members of the indigenous population and, notably, amongst some right-wing Conservative MPs.

Violent racial disturbances between white Britons and black Britons in Nottingham and Notting Hill in 1958 brought some of the issues involved into the limelight.² However, many politicians of all parties were reluctant to control Commonwealth immigration. There were perhaps three main reasons for this reluctance. Firstly, there was a genuine and deep-seated fondness and sense of responsibility for the Empire and newly-emerging Commonwealth countries. Britain was seen as 'the Mother Country' to a family of mostly young nations.³ Citizens of the Empire and Commonwealth were deemed to be British subjects; Britain was proud to operate an 'Open Door' policy towards such people. They were allowed to enter and leave Britain at will, or settle permanently if they wished. This 'Open Door' policy was seen by much

established political opinion at the time as one of the factors binding the Commonwealth together. The Conservative Party Home Secretary told the House of Commons in 1961 that as much as a quarter of the world's population were entitled to enter and settle in Britain via these provisions.⁴ Secondly, immigration from the New Commonwealth was seen by many as a source of extra labour which Britain's economy desperately needed. Without such additions to the work force, it was suggested, Britain would not be able to match her competitors' economic performance or to fill jobs that needed doing. So it was that Enoch Powell, later to become well known for his views opposing New Commonwealth immigration, was instrumental in persuading workers from the Caribbean to come to Britain to work in the Health Service.

Thirdly, the immigrants from the New Commonwealth were non-white; it was difficult, perhaps impossible, to draft legislation to control their numbers which did not at least appear to discriminate against them on racial grounds. Such discrimination was anathema to many British politicians, and to much established political opinion at that time.

Support for immigration controls was most marked amongst back-bench Conservative MPs and in local Conservative constituency associations. Gradually, pressure for controls built up in the Conservative government, and eventually a bill was introduced to control immigration from the Commonwealth. The 1962 Commonwealth Immigration

Act was the first piece of legislation to seek to control specifically immigration from the Commonwealth. It did this through a system of employment vouchers: category A vouchers were for those immigrants with a specific job awaiting them, category B vouchers were for those immigrants whose work skills were in short supply in Britain, and category C vouchers were available to all on a first come, first served, basis. Although the 1962 Act has great symbolism as the first Act to seek to limit directly New Commonwealth immigration, its effect on immigrant numbers was not that great: immigration, increasingly that of dependants, continued at around 50,000 a year for much of the 1960s and 1970s.⁵ This figure reflects the concern of successive governments not to act illiberally in this area.

It is clear that the Conservative government brought in the 1962 Act with great reluctance. R.A. Butler, the Home Secretary, introduced the Bill at the Second Reading debate in the Commons. He made only a half-hearted attempt to justify it and was ill-prepared to defend it. He began his speech: "It is only after long and anxious consideration and a considerable reluctance that the Government have decided to ask Parliament to control immigration from the Commonwealth".⁶ The leaders of the Labour Party, the Liberal Party and the churches together with much established political opinion, as expressed in the quality press, vehemently opposed the Bill. However, the Act was popular among the electorate and also among many party and

political activists outside Westminster. Labour and Liberal politicians found themselves under very strong pressure from their constituents to support immigration control. By 1965, the Labour Party, Liberal Party and the churches had all changed their policies and were supporting control of coloured immigration from the New Commonwealth.

The Labour Party won the 1964 General Election and continued the policies of the 1962 Act; indeed, in 1965, the Labour Government drastically limited New Commonwealth immigration even further. Policy proposals in Labour's 1965 White Paper Immigration from the Commonwealth adopted similar arguments to the Conservatives' in 1962: the number of New Commonwealth immigrants was the key to harmonious race relations in Britain. These race relations, it was implied in the White Paper, were poor and under threat, hence more stringent immigration control was required. The White Paper's proposals included the abolition of the 1962 Act's C category vouchers for those with no jobs awaiting them, or without specific skills. The number of vouchers available to Commonwealth citizens was reduced to 8,500, one thousand of which were specifically allocated to Malta.

It was also in 1965 that the Race Relations Act was passed. This Act, for the first time in English law, specifically made racial discrimination in a public place an offence. It was now illegal to refuse anyone goods or facilities, for instance in a shop or public house, on the grounds of racial identity. The Act made a distinction between public and private places and did not, for example,

extend to the areas of employment and housing. The 1965 Act was also used as an opportunity to amend the 1936 Public Order Act so as to make incitement to racial hatred an offence. Controversially, like the 1936 Act, the 1965 Race Relations Act did not require deliberate intent to incite racial hatred before an offence was committed. The 1965 Race Relations Act was subjected to much criticism, mainly from right-wing conservatives who doubted whether it would be effective, and who also saw the Act as an infringement of individual liberties.

At the time of the passage of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, the Conservatives had established the first race relations body created by central government, the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council (CIAC). The CIAC's brief was to advise government on immigration issues and to monitor efforts to produce racial harmony. Labour's 1965 proposals in the White Paper Immigration from the Commonwealth replaced the CIAC with a new and more prominent body, the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants (NCCI). A further body was also created at this time, as a product of the 1965 Race Relations Act: this was the Race Relations Board. The Board's duties were solely to enforce and administer the 1965 Act, save for the incitement to racial hatred provisions, which were the responsibility of the Home Secretary.

The period from mid-1965 to late 1967 was one in which issues of race and immigration appeared to have been dealt with satisfactorily. Leaders of the major political

parties and established political opinion were generally agreed that the existing controls and race relations measures were the correct policies. This period has been referred to as "the liberal hour", a time when liberal values ruled unchallenged.⁷ This harmony was broken by the intervention of Conservative Shadow Cabinet member Enoch Powell, and some other Conservative MPs. Against a background of increased immigration by Asians from East Africa, Powell made several controversial speeches. In his most well known, the 'rivers of blood' speech in April 1968, Powell warned of great trouble ahead unless coloured immigration was brought to an almost complete halt and repatriation begun. Powell breached the liberal consensus in this area in a highly controversial way, and this speech must rank as one of the most publicised and strongly criticised in British post-war politics. Support among the electorate for Powell's views appeared to be great and spread widely amongst voters of all political persuasions.⁸ In response to the campaign led by Powell and fellow Conservative MPs, the Labour Government hurriedly introduced a new and more restrictive immigration control measure, the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act. This Act attempted to limit immigration to those with close links with the United Kingdom and included a preference towards those who could show that they had a British grandparent or parent. This 'grandfather clause' caused great controversy since, despite government denials, such a clause clearly affected coloured New Commonwealth immigrants more than it

did whites from the "old" Commonwealth.

As in 1962 and 1965, immigration control measures were accompanied by attempts to help black Britons. The 1968 Race Relations Act was a stronger and more extensive version of the earlier 1965 Act, now bringing employment and housing under its control. The 1968 Act abolished the NCCI and replaced it with a similar but more powerful body, the Community Relations Commission (CRC). Almost certainly as a result of Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech, Harold Wilson, Labour Prime Minister, also initiated the Urban Programme. This was an attempt to bring special aid to needy geographical areas, some of which had high concentrations of black Britons. Care was taken not to identify black Britons as being 'special problems', mainly by directing help at deprived geographical areas and needy white Britons as well. It is generally agreed, however, that the Urban Programme grew out of the desire to help needy black inhabitants.

In 1971, the newly-elected Conservative Government fulfilled an election manifesto pledge by tightening immigration controls via the 1971 Commonwealth Immigration Act. This Act replaced employment vouchers by work permits, which did not have the attendant right of permanent settlement or the right for dependants to enter the country. People who had close links by birth or descent with the United Kingdom, 'patrials' in the words of the Act, were not subject to immigration controls. The Act was strongly opposed by the Labour Party, the Liberal

Party, the race relations bodies and the churches.

In 1976, a third race relations measure, the 1976 Race Relations Act, was created by the Labour Government. This Act further strengthened the 1968 Race Relations Act, notably by forbidding indirect racial discrimination. This was defined in the Act as resulting from practices which, whilst applied to everyone, had a particularly adverse effect on one or more specific racial groups. The 1976 Act also abolished both the Race Relations Board, whose duty was to enforce the 1968 Act, and the Community Relations Commission, whose task was to work for better race relations. A new body, the Commission for Racial Equality, was formed by the 1976 Act both to enforce the Act and to promote better race relations.

In the area of race policy, two events of 1981 are noteworthy: the British Nationality Act, and riots in Brixton. The British Nationality Act was introduced in 1981, and presented by its supporters as a long-overdue attempt to organise Britain's citizenship laws. It was hoped that if citizenship was clearly defined and linked to rights of settlement in Britain, then this would both clarify immigration practice and avoid the charge of racial discrimination. Critics of the Act viewed it as a further, if disguised, immigration control measure. Also in 1981, violent and well-publicised riots occurred in Brixton and elsewhere. Opinion was divided over how much they were "racial" riots: certainly many, but not all, the rioters were young black people; they were seen on television news

throwing stones and petrol bombs at the police and looting and destroying property. As a leading judicial figure, Lord Scarman was asked by the Conservative Government to produce a detailed report on the riots; this made several detailed policy recommendations, designed particularly to improve relations between the police and the community in inner-city areas.

The period from the creation of the first Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1962 until the 1981 British Nationality Act and Lord Scarman's report on the Brixton riots, provides an appropriate framework within which to examine established political opinion's response to race politics. The constant revision of immigration control and race relations measures in the period suggest that successive British governments found race politics a difficult area with which to deal. The debates surrounding legislation and policy development in this area thus provide an insight into how opinion formers and political leaders in Britain reacted to some problematic issues. Such debates are revealing of basic political attitudes and motivations.

II

One of the interesting features of this policy area is the frequency with which the word "liberal" was used. The word occurs frequently in politicians' speeches, academic works, newspaper articles and similar contexts. The liberal view in this area of social policy is commonly associated both with a reluctance to control large-scale coloured immigration from the New Commonwealth and with support for policies leading to the full acceptance and participation of black Britons in British society. Such views have been expressed particularly by leaders of such groups as the Labour Party, the Liberal Party, race relations bodies and the churches. Despite its wide usage, or perhaps because of it, the meaning attached to the word "liberal" has rarely been defined or discussed in the area of race policy. It seems that participants in this area of social policy have viewed its meaning as self-evident, "liberal" appearing in the debate as a shorthand term used to cover an ill-defined set of beliefs, policies and attitudes. This imprecise usage should not be a surprise. There are considerable difficulties in trying to establish a precise meaning of "liberal" in British race politics, as indeed there is in defining liberalism generally. Most commentators are agreed that liberalism is a long and broad political tradition which defies easy definition or description.⁹

Clearly, however, the liberal tradition is fundamentally

about liberty. Liberty itself is subject to varying interpretations. The political thinkers usually associated with theories of liberalism, such as Locke, J.S. Mill, and J.M. Keynes, all favoured promoting freedom and individual liberty, but differed both in how to achieve this goal, and indeed, as to what the goal of liberty was. A useful distinction here is that between ideas of negative and positive freedom.¹⁰ The older liberal tradition emphasised negative freedom; the absence of constraints, particularly constraint by the state, made people free. This justified a minimalist state whose role was to provide a framework which stopped citizens from restricting each other's liberties. The idea of positive freedom carried with it the notion that the social environment restricts liberty and must be changed to set people free from its constraints. This requires a state which takes an active part in society, changing, shaping and moulding it and individuals within it, to promote more liberty. This idea of positive freedom grew strongly in Britain in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By 1945, the term Liberal was reserved for members of the Liberal Party, or perhaps for supporters of negative liberty, whilst "liberal" was used for those who favoured state political intervention to positively create conditions which would lead to more freedom for people.

In the post-war period, such liberals, with their concern for positive liberty, had moved some distance from the traditional form of negative liberalism. Their desire to

create conditions which would favour liberty led them to view the state as an instrument for persuasion, social engineering and social provision. With this went their view that people did not necessarily know what was best for them, that their essential personalities were malleable and subject to change in the right direction, and that individual freedom should be subject to policies aimed at a conception of the maximum collective freedom and liberty. Values and attitudes characterised as liberal in race politics in the period under discussion have drawn most heavily from the positive freedom tradition. The concept of individual negative freedom has, for example, not been heavily emphasised, whilst policies of positive freedom to change society and individuals within it have received emphasis.

Liberal values within the race area are not derived from one particular political party or group or any one particular political school of thought. Nor does it seem that true liberals must share the same opinion on the politics of race, or hold these opinions equally strongly or consistently. For example, the leadership of the Labour Party has often been perceived as being liberal in the period 1965-67, when Roy Jenkins was Home Secretary; this has been widely described as 'the liberal hour'. However, when the Labour Government passed the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act, it was commonly seen as acting in an "illiberal" manner. Moreover, the Labour Party, Liberal Party and the churches all changed their "liberal" policy

of outright opposition to immigration controls in 1962, to support for controls in 1965. Liberal attitudes in race politics, it can be deduced, have not been based on a grand design or blueprint to deal with a particular issue or set of issues. Rather, they have been largely ad hoc responses, informed by prior values to particular and largely unforeseen events and political problems.

All political recommendations and social analysis, of whatever political persuasion, rest on choices made from a range of available values, explanations and assumptions. Examination of the race policy area in the period 1961 to 1981 reveals that liberal attitudes are associated with a wide diversity of beliefs and ways of looking at man and society.¹¹ Some themes can, however, be isolated as central. Five of them are identified in this study as forming key elements of the liberal response. They are a particular view of man and human behaviour together with the values of rationality, equality, pluralism and community. These values have been pressed frequently and prominently in the liberal debate on race politics. Despite some differences of emphasis and change over time, there is a degree of consensus and coherence on these values in the debate on race policy. The word "liberal" is used, therefore, in this study to describe no more than values widely held by these groups and individuals who are commonly identified as belonging to the liberal tradition in this policy area.

Political argument is rarely simple or straightforward.

Often choices have to be made not between the self-evidently good or evil, but between good or a mixture of the good and less good. To achieve a desired aim may require the promotion of one value whilst disregarding or minimising values which in other circumstances would be pre-eminent. Such choices between values exist in all political traditions: liberal, conservative, socialist or whatever. Within these traditions, some values may be held more strongly than others, and within the overall tradition conflicts may occur between particular values. The aim of this study is to examine the coherence and consistency of values within the liberal tradition as it faced the issues of race politics in the period 1961-81. For example, liberals may have a commitment to democratic majority rule and also to preventing racial discrimination. This may produce problems if the majority of the population wish to discriminate on racial grounds against the minority: this would initiate a conflict between moral and political imperatives. Detailing such conflicts, however, is not to suggest that liberal values have been either incorrect or unsuccessful.

Race politics has been chosen as the subject of this study since this is an area where a liberal response has been widely recognised. In this sense, the politics of race provide an excellent vehicle for an examination of British liberal values in the period 1961-81. It seems probable that similar basic values have shaped and informed liberal stances in other areas of policy during this

period. Whilst this assumption awaits further research, it is hoped that the arguments of this study will provide some insight into and leverage upon liberal values in other areas of policy.

III

In order to examine the coherence and consistency of liberal reactions to race politics in Britain, the following procedure has been employed. Firstly, the evidence from those groups most commonly associated with liberal values was examined in great detail: the Labour Party, Liberal Party, race relations bodies and the churches. The values, attitudes and policy proposals from political and social leaders in these groups are found to be particularly revealing. Examination of this evidence discloses that there has been a broad consensual response amongst these leaders to issues of race. Several ideas and themes appear frequently and seem to influence the debate strongly in all these groups. These ideas, as mentioned above, include a view of man and human behaviour and ideas of rationality, equality, pluralism and community. Once this consensus had been identified and some key components recognised, material was collected to substantiate these claims. This material constitutes Part One of this study. Part Two discusses the themes that emerge from the material of Part One, with a view to examining their coherence and consistency.

In Chapters One to Four, the reactions of the leadership of the Labour Party, the Liberal Party, race relations bodies and the churches to race politics is outlined. The material selected to represent their views is chosen deliberately in order to highlight the themes which it is claimed are typical of their responses. These chapters constitute a qualitative content analysis of some of the prominent ideas in the liberal response in the period 1961-81. A number of points about these chapters require emphasis. The material selected concentrates on what appear to be the basic values of liberal opinion in this area. Little attention is paid here to technical details such as, for example, the intricacies of nationality and citizenship law. Interest is focused instead upon the broad political and philosophical justifications of policy, for these justifications are revealing of fundamental values. It is hoped that the variety of sources cited will avoid criticism that these are carefully selected remarks of a few elite formers of opinion. Group policy-making is undoubtedly a more complex process than a small number of people at or near the centre of political power formulating policies and practising them. No particular decision-making model is therefore being proposed in this study, despite the emphasis placed upon established political opinion at or near the centre of government. The purpose of this study is not directed at the method of policy-making, but at basic and fundamental values and ideas. The recent history of race policy has been well documented,

particularly the period of the 1960s, and it is not intended to add to those accounts.¹² It is hoped, however, that sufficient historical detail is provided to allow those unfamiliar with this policy area to follow developments. In many respects, the material available dictates the format and character of the chapter concerned with groups' reactions to race politics: where, for example, the group is a major political party there is considerable material available in Parliamentary debates, party policy documents and elsewhere. At the other extreme, church leaders have been only intermittently active in this area, and material is therefore less abundant. Recourse is made in this instance, therefore, to more ephemeral material such as church newspaper reports of speeches.

In some ways, the history of liberal reactions to the politics of race is that of the Labour Party. Amongst its leaders have always been those who strongly espoused liberal values, who have been in government, and were thus able to implement policy shaped by these values. The Labour Party has had the resources, and the commitment, to research and publicise its views in this area. Sometimes, particularly in the case of immigration control as against race relations, Labour politicians have been accused of acting illiberally. However, as will be suggested below, even when controlling New Commonwealth immigration, Labour politicians have justified their actions with arguments which have been recognisably part of the liberal consensus.

Hansard, the House of Commons record of debates, is a prime source of research for evidence of the Labour Party leadership's values in this area. Of particular usefulness are the Second Reading debates concerned with race and immigration legislation. These debates tend to be of a broadly political and philosophical nature, and they form the basic material from which the policy of Labour leaders is deduced in this study. Accompanying this material is evidence from speeches, manifestos and biographies.

The Liberal Party was a small party during the period under consideration, and material illustrating its leaders' views is less abundant than is the case with the Labour Party. Nevertheless, Liberal leaders participated in many of the House of Commons debates on the subject of race. The Liberal Party has also been active in publishing documents and making conference resolutions concerning race relations and immigration. That the party has not been in government during this period (the 1976-78 Lib-Lab Pact was no exception) has perhaps allowed it to reflect more faithfully the liberal tradition than might have been the case were it constrained by governmental responsibility.

The annual reports of the various government-created race relations bodies since 1962 provide a year-by-year account of the development of policy in the area of race. On issues of race relations, these bodies have frequently been ahead of government and their proposals have foreshadowed future legislation. The yearly description and analysis of trends provided by these bodies is invaluable in tracing the

development of ideas and themes.

The position of the Bishops in the House of Lords coupled with an increasing emphasis on the political involvement of the churches means that there is considerable evidence of the views of church leaders. Many evidently viewed their role as that of the nation's conscience and have been outspoken on several issues of racial policy. Material is presented here from debates in the House of Lords, speeches and documents published by the churches.

There is here no detailed discussion of liberal opinion in the Conservative Party. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, liberal Conservative views on race were most prominent in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but began to lose their importance from 1965. Many leading liberal Conservatives accepted immigration control after 1962, and gradually the remaining opponents of immigration control left the Commons. Edward Boyle, for example, became Vice Chancellor of Leeds University in 1970; Iain Macleod, perhaps the staunchest liberal Conservative in this area, and who fought hard against the restriction on Kenyan Asian immigration in 1968, died in 1970. A few Conservative liberals such as Lord Whitelaw and Lord Hailsham continued to be influential in this area until the mid-1970s, but they were a diminishing voice. The rightward drift of the Party in the 1970s muted the voice of liberal Conservatism on issues of race relations. Compared with earlier occasions, the views of many Conservative MPs during the debates on the 1976 Race Relations Act and the 1981 British

Nationality Act, were markedly more right-wing. Moreover, recent books by leading Conservative liberals show complete support for tough immigration controls and the new Nationality laws. 13 These developments mean that it is difficult to trace a consistent strand of liberal Conservatism through the race policy area. 14

Chapter Five examines the evidence on the views of the indigenous white British population on race politics. Majorities are notoriously silent, rarely making speeches or writing books, so that much of the evidence supplied here is derived from opinion polls. Whilst the limitations of such data is acknowledged, there is strong evidence to be gained on certain issues. Evidence suggests, for example, that the majority of white Britons have been hostile to the phenomenon of large-scale coloured immigration from the New Commonwealth. This chapter is included in the study since the evidence provided by opinion polls leads to problems of conflicting values and consistency for those holding liberal views.

In Part Two of this study, (Chapters Six to Ten), the themes which were identified earlier as being key liberal values in this area are discussed in detail. The initial aim in each of these chapters is to draw together and summarise the data reviewed earlier, and once a summary has been made, to analyse these themes in depth. Any evidence of conflicting or inconsistent values both within themes and between them, is identified and studied. It is important to emphasise that these chapters do not attempt

to cover the philosophical or theoretical literature on topics such as 'rationality' or 'equality', nor do they enter the philosophical debate on the problematics of such issues. Identification is made, however, of the major values underlying liberal attitudes to race politics, and dilemmas posed by inconsistent or conflicting values.

Nomenclature is a major problem for any investigation of British race politics, since Britain has experienced an extensive, large-scale immigration of people with different cultures and skin colour. Many of these immigrants came from the New Commonwealth. Pakistan ceded from the Commonwealth in 1973, so that continuing immigration is now technically from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan. This title has been little used in discussion. Much of the concern of participants in the race debate has been towards immigrants from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan and their descendants, who are settled in Britain and who hold British nationality. A variety of terms has been used to describe these groups, and in such a controversial area, the usage of certain terms tends to indicate support of a particular stance towards them. There is no completely satisfactory solution to this problem. In this study, where reference is primarily to non-white immigrants from the New Commonwealth including Pakistan, the term "immigrants" is employed to describe such people. Where reference is to those who have settled in Britain and have full citizenship, the term "black Britons" is used. The term "white Britons" is used to denote members of the

majority white indigenous population. It is hoped that this terminology is accurate without being perjorative.

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Chapter One : The Labour Party

The Labour Party was the most important and influential body to espouse liberal values in the area of race politics in the period under consideration. As such, its views and opinions are of prime importance to the task of identifying these values. The Party's leadership tried to maintain liberal values however much it was subjected to pressures to deny them. Many of Labour's traditional supporters, as outlined in Chapter Five below, opposed New Commonwealth immigration and were ambivalent or hostile to race relations measures. These tensions and pressures led the Party leadership to act in ways that were commonly viewed as illiberal, as for example, in tightening immigration controls via the provisions of the 1965 White Paper, Immigration from the Commonwealth and the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act. However, it is noteworthy that the justifications for such further controls, as will be shown in this chapter, were often phrased in the terms and values of the current liberal consensus. The Party leadership's opinions in the period 1961-81 provide therefore perhaps the best and most extensive guide to liberal values in British race politics.

The leadership of the Labour Party, in common with other opinion formers, gave relatively little public attention to the issues raised by immigration to Britain from the New Commonwealth during the 1940s and 1950s. There is evidence that the 1945-50 Attlee Labour Government considered both

control of New Commonwealth immigration and race relations legislation, but this was not made public at the time.¹ Racial disturbances in London and Nottingham in 1958 brought the issues of immigration and race politics to the public's attention. The Labour Party's reaction to these disturbances appeared in a Labour Party Executive Policy Statement, which formed the basis of a pamphlet, Racial Discrimination.² The pamphlet declared that all Commonwealth citizens should have unconditional right of entry to Britain, and that any problems posed by this policy should be tackled with goodwill, education and greater social provision, by the government.

The Conservative Government, under strong pressure from its right wing and local constituency parties, reluctantly introduced a bill in 1961 which became the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act. The purpose of this Act was to restrict the number of New Commonwealth Immigrants into Britain.³ The leadership of the Labour Party vehemently opposed the Bill, arguing that it introduced a colour bar into British legislation, and that the needs of the economy automatically regulated immigration, making legislative control unnecessary. The Times political correspondent suggested that the Labour Cabinet was divided in its response to the Bill, the majority being opposed in principle to immigration controls, but unwilling to let the Party appear to be in favour of unlimited immigration to Britain. Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the Party, and George Brown, a leading member of the Shadow Cabinet, presented

the issue as a matter of principle despite the warnings of their colleagues that opinion polls showed an overwhelming majority in favour of controlling immigration.⁴ Another commentator has suggested that Gaitskell's strong opposition to the Bill was part of a strategy to defend himself against the Party's left wing, from which he was under great pressure at the time.⁵

Patrick Gordon Walker, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary, began the Labour attack at the Second reading of the Bill in the Commons. He suggested that the Conservative Home Secretary, R.A. Butler, who had introduced the Bill to the House:

'is an advocate now of a Bill which contains bare-faced, open race discrimination. He advocates a Bill into which race discrimination is now written - not only into its spirit and its practice, but into its very letter'.⁶

Gordon Walker argued that the Government had the wrong approach:

'Of course there is a real problem, a problem of social relations, housing and overcrowding, which produces racial tension...there are two causes of the real problem. One is what I might call the clotting of the immigrant population, its gathering together in smallish areas of poor housing and high unemployment. The second cause of the problem is that, in these areas of clotting population, the creation of new jobs by the expanding economy is outrunning the provision of houses.'⁷

Hugh Gaitskell concluded the Second Reading debate for the Labour Party. He made a scathing and bitter attack on the Bill, indeed his biographer records that Gaitskell regarded his speech as the most important he ever made.⁸ He argued

that the rate of immigration was linked to the state of the British economy and the availability of jobs and that immigrants were benefiting the economy: 'The immigrants are healthy, law-abiding and are at work. They are helping us.'⁹ The Government, he argued, wanted to restrict coloured immigration because it feared racial disorder and tension:

'There is a real problem here. None of us has ever denied that. There are social problems and an appalling housing problem. We concede the existence of these problems, in certain areas, but we do not believe for one moment that this Bill is the best way to handle them.'¹⁰

Immigration of people of a different colour and culture did, Gaitskell suggested, create problems, but:

'Do the Government deal with it by seeking to combat social evils by building more houses and enforcing laws against overcrowding, by using every educational means at their disposal to create tolerance and mutual understanding, and by emphasising to our own people the value of these immigrants and setting their face firmly against all forms of racial intolerance and discrimination? That is what we believe and that is what I hope the Government believe, but it is not what is implied by the Bill. Indeed, there is no shred of evidence that the Government have even seriously tried to go along this course and make a proper enquiry into the nature of this problem. They have yielded to the crudest clamour, 'Keep them out'.¹¹

The Labour Party leadership strongly opposed controlling immigration at the Bill's Second Reading. Yet New Commonwealth immigrants mainly settled in the big industrial cities in Britain, and had the most immediate effect on Labour's traditional supporters, the English

working class. Labour's policy, as the opinion polls revealed, and many MPs knew, was very unpopular with many voters. These pressures were acknowledged by Denis Healey in a speech concluding the debate for Labour at the Commons Third Reading of the 1962 Act.¹² When asked what Labour would do about the Act if they were in power, Healey did not answer the question directly, except to say that the Party saw no reason for the Act at the present time. This move from outright opposition to controlling immigration, to opposition to controls at the present time was reflected in a Labour Party publication of 1963. The policy document Twelve Wasted Years reiterated many of the points made by Gaitskell during the parliamentary debates on the 1962 Act. However, it no longer committed the Party to repealing the Act when it was next in power.¹³ The document was clear, however, about the realities of the 1962 Act, and the existence of problems in the area of race relations. The Act:

'...was clearly a colour bar measure and is irrelevant to the real problems that exist. The faults of the Conservative Government's housing and unemployment policy have created conditions which are wrongly blamed on immigration.'¹⁴

Shortly after the debates on the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, the Labour Party published a discussion document for Labour Party groups, The Integration of Immigrants. Whilst the pamphlet did not offer a definition of "integration", it was concerned with problems which would hinder such a process. One concern was for the

effect which organised anti-immigrant groups might have on the general public. Such groups were, it argued:

'...dangerous, because surveys and investigations have shown that, apart from the fanatically colour-prejudiced minority, there are a large number of people who are slightly prejudiced or suspicious of newcomers, and this large group can be swayed into deeper prejudice - or into tolerance and acceptance if an effect is made on the other side.'¹⁵

One major weapon, the pamphlet suggested, would be for the Government to adopt:

'A sustained educational campaign to secure greater knowledge and understanding. Courses should be provided for working teachers and teachers' training courses should include the appropriate subjects (the sociology, social psychology and social anthropology of racial problems). ...This is a very important weapon against the development of prejudice and an important step in the long term towards good relations.'¹⁶

Hugh Gaitskell died in January, 1963 and with him passed much of the very strong Labour opposition to immigration controls. The Party leadership passed to Harold Wilson, and under Wilson the Party won the 1964 General Election. For the first time, issues of race and immigration played an important role in British post-war electoral politics. Labour's policy on immigration at this time was that immigrant numbers should be agreed with the Commonwealth. Until this agreement was reached, the 1964 General Election Manifesto asserted, 'Labour accepts that the number of immigrants entering the United Kingdom must be limited.'¹⁷ The constituency of Smethwick in the West Midlands attracted considerable attention during the election

campaign, Patrick Gordon Walker, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, losing the seat to Conservative Peter Griffiths, whose platform was opposition to New Commonwealth immigration. Gordon Walker had held the seat in 1950, 1951, 1955 and 1959, but was strongly identified in the public eye as being a keen supporter of New Commonwealth immigration. Indeed, the Midland correspondent of The Times was speculating as early as November 1963, whether Gordon Walker would lose his seat at the next general election over the immigration issue.¹⁸ Gordon Walker also lost a safe Labour seat at a by-election in Leyton in early 1965, especially called in order to secure his return to the House of Commons. These defeats were commonly seen to be the result of Gordon Walker's sympathy towards immigration from the New Commonwealth. Indeed, Harold Wilson said of the Smethwick result, 'It is completely contrary to the swing and all of us know why.'¹⁹ The Smethwick result of 1964 demonstrated clearly that a politician's views on immigration could markedly affect electoral support. The new 1964 Labour Government with a majority in single figures did, however, renew in November 1964 those parts of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act which required annual renewal.

Richard Crossman reveals in his 1965 diary how powerful a force the immigration issue was at the time, suggesting that since the Smethwick result, immigration could be 'the greatest potential vote loser for the Labour Party'.²⁰ It is evident that the Labour Party was afraid that it would

lose electoral support to the Tories if it were popularly identified as being more in favour of New Commonwealth immigration than the Conservatives. Consequently, Labour felt the necessity to move to a more popular and bipartisan policy, and did this through the provisions of the 1965 White Paper Immigration from the Commonwealth.²¹ The White Paper instituted stiffer controls over coloured immigration, reducing the availability of entry vouchers to 8,500 a year, one thousand of which were reserved for Malta. This it justified by arguing that anxiety over coloured immigration was a threat to good race relations, and therefore controls were necessary. However, there can be little doubt that these controls were a move to appease popular opinion and prevent the Conservatives from using the issue as an election platform.²² Stricter controls were unpopular with many Labour Party activists and Barbara Castle has suggested that it was her idea to produce the 1965 immigration controls at the same time as the 1965 Race Relations Act, in order to try to placate those supporters offended by tighter controls.²³

Part III of the 1965 White Paper was entitled 'Integration', and although it did not define the term, it outlined the Labour Government's philosophy and plans. The section began boldly:

'The United Kingdom is already a multi-racial society and Commonwealth immigrants make a most valuable contribution to our economy...there can be no question of allowing them to be regarded as second-class citizens. At the same time it must be recognised that the presence in this

country of nearly one million immigrants from the Commonwealth with different social and cultural backgrounds raises a number of problems and creates various social tensions in those areas where they have concentrated. If we are to avoid the evil of racial strife and if harmonious relations between the different races who now form our community are to develop, these problems and tensions must be resolved and removed so that individual members of every racial group can mingle freely with all other citizens at school, at work and during their leisure time without any form of discrimination being exercised against them.'²⁴

The White Paper then outlined proposals for Government action in the areas of housing, education, employment and health, to improve provision in these areas and to stop the problems mentioned earlier from arising. However:

'None of the difficulties referred to above will be resolved without a positive effort on the part of all concerned...(The Government was impressed by the work of local voluntary liaison committees in this respect, and felt that such committees)...help to create a climate of mutual tolerance in which the stupidity of racial prejudice cannot survive'.²⁵

Education of the public was viewed as being of major importance, since 'Many of the social tensions which exist arise from ignorance and a readiness to believe unfounded rumour.'²⁶ The White Paper concluded that:

'The good name of Britain, our relations with the other members of the Commonwealth, and, above all, justice and common humanity demand that Commonwealth immigrants in this country should be absorbed into our community without friction and with mutual understanding and tolerance. The Government believe that the good sense of the British people will prevail and that this will be achieved.'²⁷

The 1965 White Paper, marking as it did Labour's official

commitment to more stringent immigration controls, led to great division in the Party between supporters of this policy and those of more liberal sentiments. Labour's 1965 Annual Conference saw a stormy debate on the principles at issue; a motion asking the Government to withdraw the White Paper because it was an '...expression of surrender, however disguised, to the currents of illiberal opinion', was defeated.²⁸ Harold Wilson, Prime Minister, resisted charges that the White Paper was a colour bar: 'I repudiate the libel that Government policy is based either on colour or racial prejudice. We repudiate, indeed I resent, the accusation of illiberality...'²⁹

The other main policy initiative in the area of race legislation in 1965 was the introduction by the Labour Party of what became the 1965 Race Relations Act. The aim of this Act was to forbid racial discrimination in public places and to forbid the incitement of racial hatred. Sir Frank Soskice, as Labour's Home Secretary, introduced the Bill at the Second Reading in the Commons, and affirmed that the Government believed that the Bill was in the public interest, since:

'It would be a tragedy of the first order if our country, with its unrivalled tradition of tolerance and fair play as between one man or woman and another and perfect respect for the rights and personal worth and dignity of the individual, should see the beginnings of the development of a distinction between first and second class citizens and the disfigurement which can arise from inequality of treatment and incitement to feelings of hatred directed towards the origins of particular citizens, something for which they are not

responsible.'30

The Government's policy at this time, as Soskice outlined, was twofold: effective control of immigration together with measures to help the settlement of black Britons already in Britain. Labour's policy was:

'...directed to achieving the task of settling the new arrivals into our community as in every sense first-class citizens. It is to the achievement of this task that the Bill is directed. Basically, the Bill is concerned with public order. Overt acts of discrimination in public places, intensely wounding to the feelings of those against whom these acts are practised...breed the ill-will which, as the accumulative result of several such actions over a period, may disturb the peace.' 31

When the Conservative Party opposed the 1965 Race Relations Bill, tabling an amendment to it, Soskice agreed that they had the right to do so, but that he was sure that all MPs would agree '...that we would all be sorry to see a major party issue develop on the question of how we treat the coloured minority of our fellow citizens, or indeed any minority, coloured or not'.32 Soskice concluded his speech by asserting:

'The new arrivals are harmless, friendly people and should be so treated. They have brought us their skills and labour, which we badly need in the building up of our economy and the development of our own national life.'33

Sir Frank Soskice was replaced as Home Secretary by Roy Jenkins in December 1965. Jenkins had a reputation for being a strongly committed liberal in matters of immigration and race relations, and he presided over British race relations between 1965 and 1967, a period

which has been characterised as 'the liberal hour'.³⁴ During this period there was a broad consensus amongst established opinion formers on the issues of race, and by 1965 the Labour, Conservative and Liberal parties, together with the churches, trades unions and much of the 'quality press' were in accord. Strict control of immigrant numbers together with the Government's efforts to promote racial harmony was the agreed solution. The 1966 General Election, where issues of race played little significant part in public political debate, seemed to set the seal on this bipartisan consensus.³⁵ The 1967 debate in the House of Commons on the renewal of parts of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act clearly illustrates this consensus. The debate was notable for the agreement displayed between Quentin Hogg (later Lord Hailsham) speaking for the Conservatives and Roy Jenkins representing Labour. The consensual opinion was for control of immigration together with assistance for black Britons already living in Britain.³⁶ Debate between the leadership of the main parties was largely over the form and degree of help considered desirable for black Britons.

Roy Jenkins, as Home Secretary, made a noteworthy and influential speech in 1966 setting out his views on race relations and future policy.³⁷ This speech became something of a benchmark of liberal policy in the area of race relations. Jenkins was not, however, in favour of integration policies which led to everyone becoming the same, and stated that, 'I define integration, therefore,

not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. This is the goal.'38 He suggested that New Commonwealth immigration was helping the British economy with many of the more unpleasant jobs being performed by immigrants:

'There is therefore no overall rational basis for resentment of the coloured immigrant population in our midst. Far from hindering our successful national development, they positively help it. But resentment does not always spring from rational causes, particularly when, as is the case with coloured immigrants, their skin and their cultural differences make them natural targets for those who are looking for scapegoats. A few people, whether out of political opportunism or personal inadequacy, have deliberately whipped up racial prejudice, playing on fear and ignorance and blaming the immigrants for problems which were not of their making-but which stemmed from previous parsimony in housing, schools and welfare services.'39

The role of government, as Jenkins made clear, was to give leadership in the area of immigration and race relations. American experience supported the view, he argued, that '...this is not a problem which solves itself without positive action'.40 Jenkins affirmed that the Government strongly supported the work of race relations bodies, known as voluntary liaison committees:

'The only way in which we shall overcome prejudice against Commonwealth immigrants in this country and foster mutual understanding and tolerance is by bringing together the local authorities, the voluntary organisations and the immigrant leaders in each of the areas where immigrants have settled so that they can tackle between them the various problems which have

arisen.'41

This period of calm agreement, the 'liberal hour', was shaken in late 1967 and early 1968 by an increase in immigration of Kenyan Asians from Kenya. The Asians had British passports and were under pressure to leave Africa as Kenya pursued policies of Africanisation. Many politicians were in disagreement whether the 1959-64 Conservative Government, which had given the Asians British passports, had actually intended that they should ever be used to qualify for settlement in Britain. Conservative MP Duncan Sandys (who had been responsible for the 1963 Kenyan Independence Act which enabled Kenyan Asians to claim British passports) argued, as did Enoch Powell, that this had been an oversight. Conservative MPs on the liberal wing of the Party argued that the Asians' right to settle in Britain had been deliberately created and that such a right could not be revoked. Whatever the motivation of the Kenyan Independence Act, Asian immigration from Kenya revealed that the bipartisan consensus on race politics had not dealt successfully with the issues involved. Conservative MPs, notably Enoch Powell and Duncan Sandys, led a campaign to stop this new influx of immigrants.⁴² The Labour Government, afraid of the electoral consequence of seeming to be unenthusiastic about immigration control, rushed a Bill through the Commons in three days to limit further immigration.⁴³

James Callaghan, the Home Secretary, introduced the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Bill to the House at its Second

Reading. He suggested that:

'The Government, Parliament, all parties in the country, are fully committed to the development of a multi-racial society in Britain - a society which will be diverse in culture and will be equal before the law, a society in which all communities will have respect for each other; a society in which there will be unity in purpose and common allegiance. But this ideal of a multi-racial society, to which all of us except the extremists are committed, will not happen of its own accord. It is something that has to be worked for. Our policies must establish the ends that we will.⁴⁴

One of the ways to create such a multi-racial society, he argued, was to limit the number of New Commonwealth immigrants entering Britain, for if all those entitled to do so actually did, it could result in, 'the services of the country being placed under far greater strain than they are at present'.⁴⁵ Callaghan rejected the charge that the Bill was racialist and aiming to exclude coloured immigrants but not whites, by saying that, 'the test that is adopted is geographical, not racial...It is a wild exaggeration to refer to this legislation as racialist.'⁴⁶ David Ennals, a minister at the Home Office, concluding the Second Reading debate for the Labour Party, said that he was glad that the House had shown a good measure of unity towards the Bill: 'The debate has not been on party divisions, thank heavens that it has not.'⁴⁷ He emphasised that Britain had gained much from the new immigrants:

'These new citizens have made a significant contribution to the British way of life, economically and socially. Most honourable members on both sides of the House have no time for those who decry the contribution made to our

country's wealth by citizens of Commonwealth origin. Over the centuries our country has been enriched by the flow of successive waves of immigrants.'48

He believed, however, that immigrants who came to Britain at short notice and in large numbers created '...real problems. Those who live in areas of Commonwealth immigrant concentration are fully aware of those problems.'49 Ennals did not elucidate what these problems were. He suggested that the major point about the Bill was that it arose not out of a desire to practise racial discrimination in immigration control, but on the contrary, to:

'promote good race relations in Britain. We are determined, as an article of faith, that all citizens in Britain shall have equality, not only before the law, but in opportunities for education, housing, employment, social security and the rest. We are determined to avoid the situation which has developed in the United States, where patterns of prejudice and discrimination have created an under-privileged indigenous minority, many of whom react violently against what they conceive to be second-class citizenship.'50

Despite the new controls imposed by the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act, both Duncan Sandys and Enoch Powell continued to lead a campaign against New Commonwealth immigration. Powell made his highly-publicised 'rivers of blood' speech in April 1968, prophesying that disaster loomed if large-scale coloured immigration continued and repatriation was not begun: 'As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see "the River Tiber running with much blood".'51 Powell's views, whilst

supported by much of the electorate, horrified liberal opinion and broke the consensus previously constructed on race issues. Labour politicians viewed Powell's speech as profoundly unhelpful to good race relations, and Barbara Castle, having watched Powell on television, records that:

'As we listened to his relentless words - "I see the Tiber running with blood" - intense depression gripped us. I knew he had taken the lid off Pandora's box and that race relations in Britain would never be the same again. This is certainly an historic turning point, but in which direction? I believe he has helped to make a race war, not only in Britain, but perhaps in the world, inevitable.'⁵²

James Callaghan, Home Secretary at the time and later Prime Minister, interpreted Powell's speech in a similar manner. In his memoirs, Callaghan wrote that, 'Enoch Powell fanned prejudice to fever heat with his speech in April 1968'.⁵³ Only days after Powell's speech, the Labour Government was defending at its Second Reading the Bill which was to become the 1968 Race Relations Act. James Callaghan, whilst not mentioning Powell by name, began his speech:

'We are discussing a subject which is heavily charged with emotion, in which there is nothing easier than to fan the flames of suspicion and resentment or of fear...we are called upon to lead the country and our fellow men and women away from a prospect of strife and enmity and towards a society in which we shall live in freedom and in peace with each other, no matter what may be our race or our colour.'⁵⁴

David Ennals, Callaghan's deputy at the Home Office, concluded the Second Reading debate, and did not hesitate to mention Powell by name: 'The damage done by that one

speech can hardly be overestimated. There has been set loose a torrent of feeling, maybe sincerely held but extremely damaging to good community relations.'⁵⁵

Labour, Conservative and Liberal leaders were anxious to restore the political consensus on race which Powell's speech had broken. James Callaghan appealed for unity of purpose with the Conservatives: 'Let us see how far we (can) move together in this matter.'⁵⁶ David Ennals said, 'None of us want these questions to be party issues.'⁵⁷ This appeal to keep immigration and race issues out of politics was largely successful amongst established political opinion.⁵⁸

The 1968 Race Relations Act extended the powers of the 1965 Race Relations Act, notably in making racial discrimination illegal in the areas of housing and employment. James Callaghan outlined Labour's justification for the new proposals; the response of the House to racism, he argued, should be 'effective social policies', but these required the support of legislation.⁵⁹ There was a need for greater research, for:

'In matters of race, so much of our prejudice springs from ignorance and from fear. Knowledge and understanding are the essential prerequisites and are, therefore, the enemies of prejudice.'⁶⁰

He denied that the Bill would introduce special privileges for coloured people:

'The legislation which I am proposing does not seek to put any group in a privileged position. There is evidence that coloured people suffer from grave disadvantages on matters like housing and jobs. To

remove these disadvantages and place them on the same footing as their fellows is not to create a privileged class. What the Bill is concerned with is equal rights, equal responsibilities and equal opportunities and it is, therefore, a Bill for the whole nation and not just for minority groups. Its purpose is to protect society as a whole against actions which will lead to social disruption, and to prevent the emergence of a class of second-class citizens.'61

David Ennals affirmed that Britain benefited from New Commonwealth immigrants:

'...the great majority of immigrants from the Commonwealth are law-abiding and hardworking people, who are anxious mainly for security and a higher standard of living. That is why they have come. They have made a significant contribution to our economy.'62

James Callaghan's assurance that the Bill would not create a privileged minority was also repeated by David Ennals:

'The Bill seeks to ensure that, so far as the law can provide, all men and women shall have equal opportunity—nothing more and nothing less. At present, many coloured people undoubtedly have unequal opportunities....The Bill will give no special rights to anyone. It will apply to the whole population...'63

Harold Wilson received some criticism for not responding to Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech with a prompt rebuttal; it was not until May 1968 that he made a major public speech attacking Powell. Wilson's record of these events in his memoirs reflects his recognition of how popular Powell's views were and included a plea to take the race issue out of politics.⁶⁴ Part of Wilson's speech contained a promise of aid to areas of social need through the setting up of a special initiative, the Urban Aid

Programme. This, Wilson said, was to be a programme to alleviate problems of welfare, health, housing and education. Whilst race was always implicit in the programme's rationale, strong attempts were made not to present the new initiative as being specifically directed towards black Britons.⁶⁵ In his speech, Wilson suggested that, 'expenditure should be on the basis of need and the immigration problem is only one factor in the assessment of social need.'⁶⁶

James Callaghan introduced the measure to the House, which implemented the proposals in Wilson's speech, and which became the Local Government Grants (Social Need) Bill of 1969. Callaghan said:

'The purpose of the Bill is to provide for the care of our citizens who live in the poorest or most overcrowded parts of our cities and towns. It is intended to arrest, insofar as it is possible by financial means, and reverse the downward spiral which afflicts so many of these areas. There is a deadly quagmire of need and apathy...I think that we have all seen in public life the way in which unmet needs, when they are felt by citizens incapable of matching the situation, create apathy and the apathy then gives rise to further needs which are not met.'⁶⁷

The proposals were not simply directed at areas of high immigrant concentration: 'It is a programme designed to meet the needs of the poorest, whatever their colour. They are all citizens of this country.'⁶⁸ Callaghan concluded: 'We are embarking, in this programme, on another modest but important step in trying to ensure that every citizen in this country has a fair start in life and a fair

opportunity for living out his life.'69

At the end of a difficult decade for Labour over issues of race politics, the Party had developed several strands of policy. Labour's stance on immigration at this time, reflecting a resolution passed at the 1968 Annual Conference, was that immigration should be 'based not on colour but on the social and economic needs of the country'.⁷⁰ Labour's broad policy on race relations, as revealed in its 1970 General Election Manifesto, was that:

'society should not discriminate against minorities on grounds of religion or race or colour; that all should have equal protection under the law and equal opportunity for advancement in and service to the community.'⁷¹

The Party's attitude to Enoch Powell and those who supported his views on immigration and repatriation was well expressed in a resolution passed at the 1970 Annual Conference:

'This Conference...is concerned that the pernicious and reactionary ideology of Powellism has, with the help of the Tory Party and press, gained a hold with many electors who have been frightened into support through not having enough facts to counter the argument.'⁷²

The Urban Programme and other initiatives, the Conference suggested, 'are benefiting the whole community, residents and newcomers alike, in...areas of social need'.⁷³

In 1970, the General Election was won by the Conservative Party in a campaign where all the major parties were anxious to minimise the race issue. Under the liberal conservatism of Edward Heath, Conservative policy was not to exploit racial issues for electoral gain. Labour

politicians, after the bruising they had received over the 1968 Immigration Control Act, and Powell's speeches, were largely happy to let sleeping dogs lie. Liberal politicians had had their own problems with elements in the Party who supported the Powellite position (see Chapter Two below). Powell himself attained great publicity during the campaign for his views that immigration should be halted and repatriation introduced. Indeed, he may have contributed to the Conservative victory and to his rival, Edward Heath's success, by associating the Conservatives with a strong immigration control policy. The degree of influence Powell had on the 1970 General Election has been widely debated; the balance of the argument suggests that Powell may indeed have won the election for the Conservatives.⁷⁴

The 1971 Commonwealth Immigration Act was the outcome of a pledge in the Tories' 1970 General Election Manifesto to control immigration from the New Commonwealth even further. The Act was strongly opposed by the Labour Party and most established political opinion. The Party's opposition to the Act was, however, somewhat weakened since the 'patrial' provisions in the legislation built on the principles of Labour's 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act.⁷⁵ There is also evidence that, as in 1962, 1965 and 1968, the Labour Party was divided over immigration controls. The Times' political correspondent noted that at a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party to discuss the 1971 Bill, twelve back-benchers spoke in favour of the legislation. The same

correspondent suggested that all twelve MPs were middle-class intellectuals; working-class trades union MPs (who could have been expected to be most aware of their constituents' views), remained silent.⁷⁶

James Callaghan led the Labour Party at the Second Reading debate in the Commons. He affirmed that he and the Party must oppose the Bill, although he was very aware of:

'...the inflammatory tinder that lies around, both in immigration control and race relations. I have always tried to proceed on the basis that this was not a fit subject for party controversy if it could be avoided, and that neither the community of immigrants nor the home community would be helped by party divisions on this issue.'⁷⁷

It was Callaghan's belief that the Bill would treat black Britons and future immigrants differently and adversely to white Britons.⁷⁸ The correct way ahead, he said, was to strengthen the work of the Urban Programme:

'I must express my objection to the complete imbalance caused by failure to concentrate on the urban rehabilitation programme...decent housing, decent schooling, good amenities in the areas where the coloured immigrants have settled. In my view, this is the way, rather than a Bill like this...in which we should deal with the problem of the immigrant, if indeed it is a problem of the immigrant and not a problem of the white population. The cries of the underprivileged are not stifled by a shabby bill like this. One merely gives a badge of respectability to prejudice by a bill of this nature.'⁷⁹

Roy Jenkins concluded the Second Reading debate for the Labour Party. His first reason for opposing the Bill was

that it would harm community relations:

'...it is in my view liable to make.... every new coloured immigrant or every existing coloured immigrant born in this country less secure, less wanted and less belonging, thus inevitably exacerbating community relations.'80

The Act would, he suggested, be unfair and treat immigrants arbitrarily, giving them fewer rights than the indigenous population.⁸¹ Jenkins rejected Enoch Powell's view that the immigrants would form unassimilable concentrations in English cities:

'I believe that attitude to be based on an extraordinary view of British history. For centuries past, this and every other country which has played a major part in the mainstream of world events has benefited greatly from its immigrants...we have constantly been stimulated and jolted out of our natural island lethargy by a whole series of immigration...They rarely failed to make a contribution out of proportion to their numbers. If anyone doubts that, let him look at British business today...This is not merely a matter of business; where in the world is there a university which could preserve its fame, a cultural centre which could keep its eminence, or a metropolis which could hold its drawing power, if it were to turn inwards and to serve only its hinterland and its own racial group?'82

A Green Paper published by the Labour Party in 1972 outlined Labour's policy in race politics. The General Secretary of the Party, Sir Harry Nicholas, in an introduction to the paper, suggested that:

'Possibly no subjects in the past decade have evoked a more emotional response than immigration and race relations. Regrettably, on many occasions attitudes have been struck which resound more with this emotion than with reason, and this has resulted in major problems

which could and should have been avoided. On the basis of the proposals in this report, however, we are offered new opportunities essentially founded on criteria which are rational and non-discriminatory.'83

The Green Paper intended to 'devise a coherent and acceptable immigration policy which is not based on the colour or race of the prospective migrant'.84 It also affirmed that 'none of us objects in principle to immigration control, but the criteria must be rational and non-racial and must be seen to be so.'85 Under the Paper's proposals, work vouchers would be issued to new immigrants, and allocated:

'...without regard to race or colour...The admission of applicants for entry should be based on the date of application for entry, job skills, labour shortages, family considerations or other appropriate non-racial criteria'.86

Integration was supported by the Paper and Roy Jenkins' 1966 definition of it as 'equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance' was accepted as its meaning.87 In order to achieve integration, Government aid should be directed towards urban areas of high immigrant concentration, but:

'We believe that aid to these areas must be greatly extended but that the emphasis must be on social need generally, not merely or primarily on "welfare for immigrants". The idea of integration as "welfare" is obsolete and condescending and should be got rid of; we may be able to learn as much from the newcomers as they from us.'88

The report concluded:

'As socialists, we are committed to the view that every

human being, whatever his colour, ethnic background or religion, has a right to equal opportunity in economic, in social and in political life.'89

A policy document written for a wide readership, Labour's Programme 1973, reiterated many of the arguments of the Green Paper. The current immigration laws, it suggested, were unhelpful:

'Racial intolerance has been aggravated by the structure of our citizenship and immigration laws...There is now a need for a rational framework of citizenship law and for immigration laws which are truly flexible...'90

The document asserted that poor social conditions led to racial prejudice:

'Britain is a multi-racial society with a rich variety of people of different ethnic, religious and cultural traditions. Discrimination and intolerance is not only wrong in itself but can cause grave damage to all people in a community...(Labour when next in office would take further steps towards integration, but)...These measures will not be effective whilst poor housing, unemployment and educational deprivation provide the breeding ground for prejudice and distrust among black and white and deny equal opportunity to those who suffer them'.91

The Labour Party won the October 1974 General Election, and issues of immigration and race played little part in either that or the February 1974 General Election. This was mainly because of the concentration on the government's confrontation with the miners and the resulting three-day week. However, the political consensus on race and immigration had been largely rebuilt after Enoch Powell's rupture of it in the late 1960s and early 1970s. All major parties were now committed to immigration control and

measures to promote better race relations. The Conservatives were perhaps most keen on controls and less keen on race relations initiatives, whilst the Labour and Liberal Parties believed that the priority lay in race relations measures rather than tighter immigration laws. Nevertheless, it appears that voters found it difficult, or impossible, to distinguish between the major political parties' policies on immigration and race.⁹² The October 1974 Labour Government saw Roy Jenkins as Home Secretary again. He took several initiatives which increased immigrant numbers during his term of office, and the third race relations act, that of 1976, was passed.⁹³

The 1976 Race Relations Act was based on ideas outlined in a 1975 White Paper, Racial Discrimination. One of the major concerns of this paper was the poor conditions in which some coloured immigrants and their descendants were living:

'The possibility has to be faced that there is at work in this country, as elsewhere in the world, the familiar cycle of cumulative disadvantage by which relatively low-paid or low-status jobs for the first generation of immigrants go hand in hand with poor and overcrowded living conditions and a depressed environment. If, for example, job opportunities, education facilities, housing and environmental conditions are all poor, the next generation will grow up less well equipped to deal with the difficulties facing them. The wheel then comes full circle, as the second generation find themselves trapped in poor jobs and poor housing. If, at each stage of this process, an element of racial discrimination enters in, then an entire group of people are launched on a vicious downward spiral of deprivation.'⁹⁴

The Government was not completely convinced that there was enough evidence to support this view conclusively, but was determined to increase their efforts to combat "racial disadvantage". The White Paper used this term but did not define it; the context suggests that it refers to the above argument. Government must act, the White Paper argued, for:

'beyond the problems of cultural alien-ness, there are the problems of low status, of material and environmental deprivation, which coloured immigrants, and increasingly, their children experience. To the extent that they share all or some of these problems with other groups in society, a general attack on deprivation will be relevant to their problems. But there may be a special dimension to their problems to the extent that the factor of racial discrimination multiplies and accentuates the disadvantages which are shared in part with others.'⁹⁵

A resolution carried at the 1976 Annual Labour Conference also contained similar sentiments. The Conference called upon the Government to 'put forward a socialist alternative to the conditions - unemployment, bad housing etc., which give rise to racialism' and pledged that the Labour movement would actively oppose racialism in all its forms, wherever it might exist'.⁹⁶

A rise in electoral support for the National Front in the mid-1970s led to considerable concern amongst liberal political opinion, especially since the Front's main appeal arose from its racial stance. The Labour Party published a pamphlet Labour Against Racism in 1976, which outlined Party policy towards race politics at this time. The pamphlet stressed the benefits immigrants had brought to

Britain:

'The immigrant population has made a very positive contribution to Britain. Without their support we would not have been able to run some of our public services...buses, trains and National Health Service.... On another level, newcomers to Britain have added a welcome variety to our standards of entertainment. All over the country reasonably priced restaurants have been opened. A minor point perhaps - but it certainly makes for greater interest and convenience.'97

The pamphlet concluded that:

'Equality of opportunity and freedom for every man and woman to choose how they want to live their lives and use their opportunities is crucial to our Labour philosophy'.98

A more detailed policy document, also published in 1976, argued for separate provision for immigrant groups:

'For a wide variety of social needs - for example, child minding or counselling of adolescents - the kind of need felt by immigrant groups is so different from that of the indigenous community that special provision is required from the government.'99

The document stated that the Labour Party 'believes that schools have a duty to educate children towards an awareness of Britain's multi-cultural and multi-racial society'.100

The 1976 Race Relations Act strengthened and extended the existing legislation regarding racial discrimination and incitement to racial hatred. In particular, it outlawed "indirect racial discrimination", practices which whilst perhaps neutral in themselves, bore heavily and adversely on black Britons. Roy Jenkins introduced the Bill at its Second Reading in the Commons.

He affirmed that:

'members of Britain's racial minorities are entitled to full and equal treatment regardless of their colour, race or national origins. Racial discrimination and the disadvantages experienced by sections of the community are morally repugnant to a civilised and democratic society. These evils are a form of economic and social waste which a society with any sense of enlightenment and far sighted self-interest cannot afford.'¹⁰¹

Action was needed, Jenkins argued, to fight racial disadvantage as well as racial discrimination.¹⁰² A new policy initiative in the 1976 Bill was a provision to allow black Britons special privileged access to training schemes and the like. Jenkins said:

'It would be wrong to adhere so blindly to the principle of formal legal equality as to ignore the handicaps preventing many black and brown workers from obtaining equal employment opportunities. Clauses 37 and 38 therefore permit - they do not require - training bodies, trades unions and employers' associations to provide training and encouragement to people in a particular racial group to help them to take up jobs or enjoy other opportunities from which they have previously been excluded or in which they have been significantly under-represented.'¹⁰³

Jenkins concluded by saying:

'It is almost ten years since I had my first opportunity as Home Secretary to state my attitude towards racial discrimination and the problems of integration. I then set out what I believed, and still believe, to be the central objective of Government policy: the promotion of equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.'¹⁰⁴

Alex Lyon, Jenkins' deputy at the Home Office, concluded the Second Reading debate for the Labour Party. He

congratulated the House on the way in which the issues involved in the Act had been debated: 'With one or two exceptions...we have discussed them in a serious, informed and responsible manner...'105 Lyon argued, 'Our society is now multi-racial, whether Honourable Members opposite like it or not. It is multi-racial and multi-cultural for the rest of our future history. These people who are here are our citizens and must be treated like any other citizens.'106 He answered Conservative critics who argued that all civilised people discriminate in their social relationships and that therefore prohibition of discrimination was misplaced, by saying:

'If we make a judgement about someone else because of his racial background or his colour and then treat him differently and worse than we treat those in the majority group, that involves serious disadvantages for the person concerned.'107

During the Second Reading of the Bill, MPs had asked about the measures granting coloured people special access to training places. Lyon replied:

'I was asked about positive discrimination. I dislike that term intensely. When I refer to this problem, I refer to correcting the disadvantages of our black citizens. Clauses 35, 37 and 38 relate to training and welfare provision for particular racial groups.'108

Alex Lyon concluded:

'There are two parts to solving the problem of ensuring satisfactory race relations in this country. One is to eliminate racial discrimination...The other is to eliminate racial disadvantage and we have not begun to tackle the whole area yet'.109

The Conservative Party was elected to government in 1979

and set about trying to define legally the nature of British citizenship, in what became the 1981 British Nationality Act. The Act, despite its concern with nationality and citizenship, was rejected by much liberal opinion and interpreted as a further, if disguised, measure to control immigration further.¹¹⁰ The Labour Party strongly opposed the Bill as it went through Parliament, arguing that it was indeed an immigration control act. However, Labour's position was weakened somewhat since the Government's proposals were similar to some which Labour had previously supported in a Green Paper discussion document. Roy Hattersley, Shadow Home Secretary, led the Labour Party at the Second Reading, arguing that the Bill was going to discriminate against black people to their disadvantage.¹¹¹ He added:

'I have spent the past 15 years telling my black constituents that they were equal before the law. I must now tell them that, if the Bill is passed, the law will discriminate against them.'¹¹²

Hattersley offered instead Labour's policy:

'It is simply a nationality policy that is completely free from racial bias, and the immigration policy that flows from that. If, by enunciating that as clearly as we can, we lose some votes, so be it.'¹¹³

Mr Tilley concluded the debate for the Labour Party. He suggested that the Bill would 'do severe damage to the cause of racial harmony in this country'.¹¹⁴ He criticised the Government's policy further:

'The Tories pretend to find justification by claiming that only rigid control of the entry of black immigrants

will enable racial harmony to develop in Britain. They do not realise that by institutionalising racism in our immigration system they are sanctioning the views of those who want to entrench it in all our other institutions. It is impossible for lasting progress on eliminating discrimination to be made within British society if the rules for admission to that society are based on the racial origins of the applicants'.¹¹⁵

It was a mistake, Tilley argued, to view the issues in this area simply in terms of immigration control: 'We must stop playing the numbers game. We believe that racial tension in this country is not caused by the number of black faces, it is caused by the number of racists'.¹¹⁶ He suggested that the Conservative proposals were fundamentally misconceived:

'The Bill represents a tragically missed opportunity. It could have provided the basis for a newly-found British unity, in which differences of race were seen not as a problem to be swept under the carpet, but as a strength of British society, in which the variety of cultures and ethnic origins was seen for what it is - a great national asset to be shared by all and to be used for the good of all. A good nationality bill could be the foundation of a successful and united British society, yet the Government have chosen to lay that foundation on the treacherous quicksand of racism and sexism instead of on the bedrock of equality.'¹¹⁷

The riots in Brixton and elsewhere in 1981 provoked much political controversy, not least over Lord Scarman's report on the disturbances. The Labour Party Conference in 1981 was deeply concerned by the riots, and passed a resolution that the Conference:

'...considers that the Government's policies of mass unemployment, industrial dereliction and the virtual

collapse of education, health, housing and other public services have created conditions which ensure anger and deprivation on the part of ethnic minorities in our major cities.'118

Conference called for more public spending in inner cities and 'positive action programmes to ensure equal opportunities for ethnic minorities...' 119 These policies were necessary, for 'the only alternative to urgent remedial action is a rising tide of violence...'120 Similar sentiments were expressed by Labour leaders in the Parliamentary debate on Lord Scarman's report and recommendations. Leading the debate for the Labour Party, Roy Hattersley said:

'There can be no doubt in the minds of Opposition members that the problems of inner cities will not be resolved until adequate resources are spent on inner cities... Until the prospect for unemployment in such areas improves, the despair that breeds violence is bound to increase...nothing will so dispel the despair and desperation that turn into riot and disorder than an economic policy that offers the real prospect of jobs for young blacks.'121

Hattersley supported Lord Scarman's recommendations for positive action programmes, and added:

'I wish to make it absolutely clear that I have no doubt whatsoever that these special programmes must include what has come to be called "affirmative action" or "positive discrimination", especially for the promotion of employment prospects for ethnic minorities. I ask for special and specific action. I do not ask for young black workers to be given better employment prospects than their white contemporaries. I simply ask that they be given the same prospects and opportunities. I recognise that unless special action is taken they will not enjoy the same prospects and opportunities. We need

special measures so they will achieve the level that is theirs by right - the level they are currently being denied.'122

Conclusion

The Labour Party has had considerable difficulty in the area of race policies. From a position of outright opposition to immigration control in 1962 it had moved by 1965 to implement stronger controls than the Conservatives had done. The Party was fiercely divided between those who felt the need to respond to electoral pressures, and those who insisted on continued support for liberal values. The Party was on much stronger ground when dealing with initiatives to help the black Britons already settled in Britain. It has consistently supported such measures and urged that greater emphasis be placed upon them. The features which were identified in the Introduction to this study as being central to liberal values are all evident in the responses of the Labour leadership during this period. There is more evidence for some of these features than others, but throughout a distinct set of values can be discerned.

The Labour Party: References

1. See Andy Thomas, Racial Discrimination and the Attlee Government in New Community Vol. X No. 2 Winter 1982 pp.270-278. See also Pantha Gupta, Imperialism and the British Labour Movement (London, Macmillan, 1975) p.346. Patrick Gordon Walker, The Commonwealth (London, Secker and Warburg, 1962) pp. 360-361. Roy Jenkins, The Labour Case (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1959) pp.45-6. Zig Layton-Henry, The Politics of Race (London, Allen and Unwin, 1984) chapter 4. Paul Foot, Immigration and Race in Politics (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965) chapter 8.
2. See The Times 29.9.1958 and Racial Discrimination (London, Labour Party, n.d. [1958])
3. For discussion of developments in the Conservative Party leading up to this decision to introduce legislation, see the following: Harold Macmillan At the End of the Day (London, Macmillan, 1973) chapter III. N.D. Deakin 'Harold Macmillan and the control of Commonwealth immigration' in New Community Vol. IV No. 2 Summer 1975 pp. 191-194. R.A. Butler was the Home Secretary who introduced the Bill in Parliament; see his account in The Art of the Possible (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973) pp. 207-8. See also Paul Foot op. cit. chapter 7. Ira Katznelson Black Men White Cities (London, OUP, 1973).
4. The Times 20.11.1961
5. Katznelson op. cit. pp. 136-138

6. Hansard Vol. 649 Col. 706
7. Ibid. Col. 714
8. Phillip Williams Hugh Gaitskell (London, Jonathan Cape, 1979) p. 678
9. Hansard Ibid. Col. 796
10. Hansard Ibid.
11. Hansard Ibid. Co. 801
12. Hansard Vol. 644 Col. 1264-1271
13. Twelve Wasted Years (London, Labour Party, 1963) pp. 278- 282
14. Ibid. p.278
15. The Integration of Immigrants: A Guide to Action (London, Labour Party, n.d. [1962]) p.2
16. Ibid. p.2-3
17. Labour Party 1964 General Election Manifesto in F.W.S. Craig (ed.) British General Election Manifestos 1900-1973 (London, Macmillan, 1975) p.268
18. The Times 22.11.1963. For details of the Smethwick result see Michael Hartley-Brewer, 'Smethwick' in Nicholas Deakin (ed.) Colour and the British Electorate (London, Pall Mall Press, 1965) pp.66-105. See also the appendix in David Butler and Anthony King, The British General Election of 1964 (London, Macmillan, 1965). The authors suggest that the Labour Party viewed three out of five Conservative seat gains as being attributable to the immigration issue. See p. 299.

19. The Times 16.10.1964. Another Labour MP well known as a campaigner against racial discrimination also lost his seat in the 1964 General Election. This was Fenner Brockway at Eton and Slough. See F. Brockway 'Why I Lost Eton and Slough' Tribune 23.10.1964. See also Anthony Adair, 'Immigration: Control and Integration' in Contemporary Review Vol. 208, No. 1203 April 1966, pp. 169-181. For criticism of the view that Patrick Gordon Walker lost Leyton because of his views on race, see Michael and Ann Dummett, 'The Role of Government in Britain's Racial Crisis' in Lewis Donnelly (ed.) Justice First (London, Sheen and Ward, 1969) pp.37-8.
20. Richard Crossman The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister Vol. I (London, Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1975), pp.149-50. Crossman wrote:
- 'Ever since the Smethwick election it has been quite clear that immigration can be the greatest potential vote-loser for the Labour Party if we are seen to be permitting a flood of immigrants to come in and blight the central areas in all our cities'.
21. Immigration from the Commonwealth, 1965 White Paper. Cmnd 2739. A major debate in the Commons in March 1965 on immigration and race relations saw a remarkable degree of agreement between MPs on the issues and calls for the problems involved not to be made subjects of party disagreement. See Hansard Vol. 709 Col. 334-453.

22. Crossman op. cit. p.299 referring to Labour's further restriction of immigration in 1965, wrote:

'This has been one of the most difficult and unpleasant jobs the government has had to do. We have become illiberal and lowered the quota at a time when we have an acute shortage of labour. No wonder all the weekend liberal papers have been bitterly attacking us. Nevertheless I am convinced that if we hadn't done all this (the White Paper's proposals for controls) we would have been faced with certain electoral defeat in the West Midlands and the South-East. Politically, fear of immigration is the most powerful undertone today'.

Labour's move from outright opposition to controlled coloured immigration in 1961 to implementing strong controls in 1965 is well documented in Paul Foot, op. cit. 1965 chapter 8. See also Zig Layton-Henry, op. cit. chapters 4 and 5. Nicholas Deakin succinctly argues that the White Paper was '...designed to stop up the gaps in the 1962 Act for which the Labour Opposition of the day had been largely responsible'. See Nicholas Deakin 'The Politics of the Commonwealth Immigrant Bill' in Political Quarterly Vol. 39, Jan-March 1968, pp.25-45. Crossman was even more outspoken in a 1972 newspaper article:

'As a party we are often faced with the potentially destructive conflict between our progressive principles and the prejudices of our working class voters...What they hate most is our softness on colour. It nearly cost us the 1964 election-particularly in the West Midlands - and it was widely felt that our improved majority in 1966 was largely due to our new tough line on immigration control'.

- Richard Crossman, 'Understanding the profusion of shrinking violets' in The Times 6.9.1972. For similar sentiments see Anthony Crossland, Socialism Now (London, Jonathan Cape, 1974) p.100.
23. Barbara Castle, The Castle Diaries 1964-70 (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1984) p.50.
 24. Immigration from the Commonwealth op. cit. p. 10, paragraph 32.
 25. Ibid. p.15, paragraph 61.
 26. Ibid. p.17, paragraph 69.
 27. Ibid. p.18, paragraph 78.
 28. See F.W.S. Craig (ed.) Conservative and Labour Party Conference Decisions 1945-1981 (Chichester, Parliamentary Research Services, 1982) p. 342. See also Peter Jenkins 'Government line prevails among noisy scenes' in The Guardian 29.9.1965.
 29. The Times 29.9.1965.
 30. Hansard Vol. 711, Col. 926.
 31. Ibid. Col. 927.
 32. Ibid. Col. 929.
 33. Ibid. Col. 943.
 34. See E.J.B. Rose et al in Colour and Citizenship (Oxford, OUP, 1969) p. 100 and Nicholas Deakin, Colour, Citizenship and British Society (London, Panther, 1970). From a different perspective John Rex has written, '...the so-called defusing of the racial issue had been achieved by a policy of near surrender to the racialists'. See John Rex 'The Race Relations

Catastrophe' in Tyrell Burgess (ed.) Matters of Principle: Labour's Last Chance (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968) p.75.

See also 'Race and Immigration: The Liberal Hour' in Brian Lapping The Labour Government 1964-70 (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1970).

35. Donley Studlar 'Immigration and Racial Change' in W.B. Gwynne and R. Rose Britain's Progress and Decline (London, Macmillan, 1980) p.113.
36. Hansard Vol. 754. Col. 921-1025
37. The speech was made to a meeting of voluntary liaison committees of the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigration on 23.5.1966. See Anthony Lester (ed.) Essays and Speeches of Roy Jenkins (London, Collins, 1967) pp. 267-273.
38. Ibid. p.267.
39. Ibid. pp.269-270.
40. Ibid. p. 270.
41. Ibid. p.272.
42. For example, see Iain Macleod, 'An Open Letter to Duncan Sandys' in The Spectator 23.2.1968. For a more detailed justification of this view, see Humphrey Berkeley The Odyssey of Enoch (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1977) pp. 74-78.
43. 'The Bill was the logical outcome of the policy of appeasement that the Labour Government had adopted in order to achieve a bipartisan consensus with the Conservatives. They were so afraid of the electoral consequences of appearing weaker than the Conservatives on immigration controls that in both 1965 and 1968 they had introduced measures which it is unlikely that even the Conservatives, if they had been in government, would have dared to introduce'. Zig Layton-Henry op. cit. p. 69.

See also Lapping op. cit. David Howell, British Social Democracy (London, Croom Helm, 1976) p.271. Richard Crossman, Diaries of a Cabinet Minister Vol. 2 (London, Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1977) pp.675-689. A leading article of The Times said of the Bill that was to become the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act: 'There is no doubt that today's Bill is a complete breach of the traditional attitude of the Labour Party towards questions of race and colour'. See The Times 27.2.1968.

44. Hansard Vol. 759, Col. 1241
45. Ibid. Col. 1247
46. Ibid. Col. 1251-1252
47. Ibid. Col. 1352
48. Ibid. Col. 1353
49. Ibid. Col. 1355
50. Ibid. Col. 1359-60. The 1967 Labour Party Annual Conference had passed a resolution which said that, 'It believes that legislation can play an important role in promoting equal opportunity without regard to race, colour or ethnic or national origins...' Craig, op. cit. 1982 p.342.

For similar sentiments, see Race Relations: Working Party Report (London, Labour Party, 1967)

51. Public reaction to Powell's speech is discussed in Chapter 5 below.

52. Barbara Castle op. cit. p.429. Crossman suggests in

his diary that Powell's speech and its popular support '...has changed the whole shape of politics overnight'. See Richard Crossman, Diaries of a Cabinet Minister Vol. 3 (London, Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1977) p.29.

53. James Callaghan, Time and Chance (London, Collins, 1987) p. 265.

54. Hansard Vol. 763 Col. 53

55. Ibid. Col. 159

56. Ibid. Col. 164

57. Ibid. Col. 159

58. In the Second Reading debate in the Commons of the 1968 Race Relations Act, Quentin Hogg (later Lord Hailsham) as Shadow Home Secretary said that, 'it would be a disaster if either of the great organised bodies of political opinion upon which the country depends for its successive governments sought to exploit or to gain political advantage from the deep feelings which are held about this topic.' Hansard Vol. 763, Col. 68. Labour politicians were calling for much the same thing: that issues of race and immigration be taken out of politics. Richard Crossman, speaking in his Coventry constituency in April 1968, said that race should never be an issue between political parties. See The Times 20.4.1968.

In March 1969, David Ennals was reported as saying at Bridgend, Glamorgan that 'race relations should be kept out of politics, so that a breathing space to do

some constructive work could be had'. The Times
18.3.1969.

59. Hansard Vol. 763, Col. 53

60. Ibid. Col. 54

61. Ibid. Col. 55

62. Ibid. Col. 165

63. Ibid. Col. 166-7

64. Referring to his speech attacking Powell's views, Wilson wrote, 'Whether it was politically wise or expedient, others can argue, but it was right'. Harold Wilson, The Labour Government 1964-1970 (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971) pp.525-8.

65. See John Edwards and Richard Batley, The Politics of Positive Discrimination (London, Tavistock, 1978).

From the beginning of the Urban Programme, as Edwards and Batley make clear, policy was equivocal about how closely social need and black Britons were to be linked. The Urban Programme is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 below.

66. Ibid. p.41

67. Hansard Vol. 774, Col. 1107-8

68. Ibid. Col. 1108

69. Ibid. Col. 1115

70. Craig, op. cit. 1982, p.342. See also the Labour Party's 1970 pre-General Election extended policy statement, Labour in Action (London, Labour Party, 1970) p. 120.

71. Labour Party 1970 General Election Manifesto in Craig,

- op.cit. 1975, p.345.
72. Craig, op. cit. 1982, p.342.
 73. Labour in Action op. cit. p.118.
 74. See for example N. Deakin and J. Bourne, 'The Minorities and the General Election of 1970' in Race Today Vol. 2, No. 7, July 1970, pp.205-210; D. Schoen, Enoch Powell and the Powellites (London, Macmillan, 1977), chapter 3; D. Studlar, 'British public opinion, colour issues and Enoch Powell; a longitudinal analysis' in British Journal of Political Science 1974, No. 4, pp.371-81.
 75. Ian Martin, 'Racial Equality' in Nick Bosanquet and Peter Townsend (eds) Labour and Equality (London, Heinemann, 1980) p. 147. Martin's article provides a useful review of Labour's policies in the race area during the period 1974-79.
 76. The Times 4.3.1971
 77. Hansard Vol. 100, Col. 57
 78. Ibid. Col. 59
 79. Ibid. Col. 75-6
 80. Ibid. Col. 148
 81. Ibid. Col. 153
 82. Ibid. Col. 154. Jenkins expressed very similar sentiments in his 1966 speech to the NCCI. See Anthony Lester (ed.) op. cit.
 83. Sir Harry Nicholas, Labour Party Green Paper (London, Labour Party, 1972) p. 1
 84. Ibid. p.7

85. Ibid. p.31
86. Ibid. p.34
87. Ibid. p.31
88. Ibid. p.36
89. Ibid. p.41
90. Labour's Programme: 1973 (London, Labour Party, 1973)
p.89
91. Ibid. p.90
92. Douglas Ashford, Policy and Politics in Britain
(Oxford, Blackwell, 1981) p. 243. David Butler and
Donald Stokes, Political Change in Britain (London,
Macmillan, 1974) p. 306.
93. Z. Layton-Henry, op. cit. p.152-6, details Labour's
policies during this period.
94. Racial Discrimination (London, HMSO, 1975) Cmd. 6234,
p.3, paragraph 11.
95. Ibid. p.4, paragraph 13.
96. Craig, op. cit. 1982, p.343
97. Labour Against Racism (London, Labour Party, n.d.
[1976]) p.5.
98. Ibid. p.7
99. Labour's Programme (London, Labour Party 1976) p.89
100. Ibid. p.90
101. Hansard Vol. 906, Col. 1547-8
102. Ibid. Col. 1348
103. Ibid. Col. 1558
104. Ibid. Col. 1567
105. Ibid. Col. 1658

106. Ibid.
107. Ibid. Col. 1661-2
108. Ibid. Col. 1666
109. Ibid. Col. 1667
110. See for example, David Dixon, 'Constitutionalising Racism: the British Nationality Bill, 1981' in Critical Social Policy Vol. 1, No. 2, 1981-2, pp. 94-100. William Whitelaw, as Home Secretary who introduced the Bill to Parliament had made a speech in 1978 in which he said, 'A Conservative government will therefore seek to introduce a new nationality law early in the next parliament. This will remove some of the possible sources of future immigration.' Speech 7.4.1978.
111. Hansard Vol. 997, Col. 946
112. Ibid. Col. 951
113. Ibid. Col. 954
114. Ibid. Col. 1026
115. Ibid. Col. 1032
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.
118. Craig, op. cit. 1982, p.345
119. Ibid. p.346
120. Ibid.
121. Hansard Vol. 1062, Col.1010-1011
122. Ibid. Col. 1012

Chapter Two: The Liberal Party

In spite of its small size, the Liberal Party is important to any study of liberal values in British race politics, its leaders, policies and values laying as they do a direct claim to being at the centre of the liberal tradition. The Party has not enjoyed success in government during the period in question, but this has allowed it considerable freedom from the influence of electoral pressure on the issue of race - a freedom not permitted to either the Labour or Conservative Parties. Statements of Liberal policy in race politics, therefore, often have a commendable frankness in preference to political expediency. As a consequence, their value as a guide to the liberal tradition's response to issues of race is great. Furthermore, the record of the Liberal Party in this area has been substantially neglected in published works on race and politics in Britain.¹

The Liberal Party was a keen supporter in the post-war era of the newly emerging Commonwealth, which it saw as an instrument for good in an unstable world. Liberals viewed Britain as 'the mother country' to a family of young nations which required protection and moral leadership and guidance.² Throughout the 1950s Liberals were active in condemning the existence of the colour bar in South Africa, and by 1955 they were concerned lest one existed in Britain; the 1955 Liberal Party General Election Manifesto asserted the individual's rights to be free whatever his

colour.³ However, in common with much established elite political opinion, the leaders of the Liberal Party expressed little public concern about New Commonwealth immigration in the 1950s. A major statement of Liberal beliefs published in 1957 did not concern itself with the issue.⁴ Two years later, the author of a popular study of Liberal policies again failed to make mention of immigration, in spite of his claim to be writing about the important issues of the day.⁵ Jo Grimond, a leading figure in the Party, writing in 1959, briefly mentioned immigration and argued that there might just be a case for a country to limit immigration, bearing in mind the current conditions of the world, but that free movement of people had usually produced the most beneficial results in the past.⁶

The racial disturbances of 1958 in Notting Hill and Nottingham were the events which concentrated the Party leaders' minds on the issues of race and immigration. The Party Executive passed an emergency resolution denouncing the racial violence and rejecting any proposals to control immigration.⁷ The 1958 Liberal Party Assembly met shortly afterwards at Torquay and agreed a detailed resolution which put the blame for racial disturbances squarely on the inadequacy of social provision in the areas concerned.⁸

Holding such views, it was never likely that the leaders of the Liberal Party would welcome the Conservatives' 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act. Jo Grimond set the tone of the Party's attack on the Bill during the debate on the

Queen's Speech, saying that it was social problems, particularly poor housing, which lay at the root of the matter. He added:

'I disagree primarily because their proposed measure is irrelevant to the main problem which faces us concerning immigration...What the Government have made no proposal about is housing. It is the consistent overcrowding that is the problem...their proposals are totally irrelevant to the only problem raised by immigration.'⁹

During the Second Reading debate on the Bill, Clement Davies, leader of the Liberal Party at the time, strongly criticised it. It was, he argued, racially discriminatory:

'The Right Honourable gentlemen and other members of the Government may assert and reassert until they are black in the face that this is not intended as a colour bar, but nobody will believe them.'¹⁰

There was no need, he asserted, for immigration control in Britain, since the country benefited from the influx of immigrants: 'I know of no occasion when this country has proved the loser through immigrants coming here. It has always gained through that.'¹¹ Despite such opposition to immigration controls by the Party leadership, Liberals were aware of what they perceived as being great support among the electorate for control of New Commonwealth immigration.¹² This produced among Liberals, as it did among members of the Labour Party, an acute dilemma: their principles led them in one direction whilst political expediency was leading in another.

A surge of support for the Liberals in 1962 saw the Party win a by-election at Orpington. In a 'commuter'

constituency, a Conservative majority in 1959 of 14,760 was replaced by a Liberal majority of 7,855. Immediately after the Orpington by-election, national opinion polls indicated greater electoral support for the Liberals than for either of the other major parties.¹³ This obviously encouraged the Liberals and gave them confidence in their stance on the issue of immigration.¹⁴ This confidence was well illustrated by an article in The Sunday Post entitled 'Survey of the Liberal Party post Orpington'. The Orpington result suggested that at some future time, a Liberal government might become a possibility; an unnamed spokesman reaffirmed the Party's opposition to the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, and when asked whether a Liberal Government would keep or repeal the Immigration Bill, the spokesman replied that they would repeal it.¹⁵

Despite such opposition to immigration control, it was becoming clear to Liberal Party leaders, from opinion polls, that a large majority of the electorate favoured such control. By late 1962, the Orpington victory had paled into insignificance, and the opinion polls showed a large drop in support for the Liberal Party. It became evident that the Party's policy on race was unpopular, and there is evidence that the Party was divided on this issue. Some Party members, notably in the West Midlands and West Yorkshire, both areas of high immigrant concentration, were arguing for a much tougher stance on immigration. Indeed, the West Midlands Liberals were, in the mid-1960s, to take a Powellite stance on race politics. Wallace Lawler, a

leading Liberal in the West Midlands, became well known for his views on race, which were at times difficult to distinguish from Enoch Powell's.¹⁶ One indication of the dilemma in which the Party found itself was that the 1963 Liberal Party Assembly rejected a motion to seek the immediate repeal of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act.¹⁷ The Assembly called instead for consultation and mutual agreement between member states of the Commonwealth on levels of immigration.¹⁸ This was very similar, if not identical, to the policy which the Labour Party was developing towards immigration controls, as it too moved away from outright opposition to controls.

The Liberal Party's 1964 General Election Manifesto only briefly mentioned immigration and repeated the new policy of controls achieved by consultation.¹⁹ The Smethwick result in the 1964 election, where Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, Patrick Gordon Walker, was defeated by a Conservative campaigning on an anti-immigration platform, shook the Liberal Party considerably. Such a victory was clearly a serious challenge to liberal values on immigration. A report published in 1965 by a Liberal working party represented a major attempt to produce a detailed policy document on the subject of New Commonwealth immigration and race politics.²⁰ The report's authors were deeply critical of the Smethwick campaign:

'No single incident in recent years has done more to damage the reputation of Britain, not only in the eyes of the newly-independent Commonwealth nations, but throughout Asia and Africa, than the shabby electoral

tactics used to win the seat of Smethwick for the Tory cause.'21

The report was clear about the real reasons for the result in Smethwick: 'Smethwick's problem has arisen from inadequate social conditions, lack of accommodation, and the low economic position of the immigrant community'.22 The arguments of the Report provide a clear insight into Liberal Party policy at this time. The Report suggested an annual immigration rate of 50-70,000 persons a year.23 The justification for this was that Britain's 'failure to improve social conditions to meet twentieth century needs makes some control necessary'.24 The benefits of immigration were also emphasised, however:

'Immigrants have provided a valuable element in our society in the past and if we are to develop and maintain a dynamic, outward-looking society in the future we need the knowledge and experience of the immigrant doctors, nurses, teachers and engineers...Our present economic need is to increase the number of skilled workers, not reduce it. The effect of shutting our doors to immigrants, rejecting the contribution they can make to our life and closing ourselves inside a static community, would be detrimental to our development as a nation.'25

Opposition to immigrants was foolish and irrational, the Report argued:

'Many people in Britain have been shocked and dismayed by the recent demonstrations of hostility towards immigrants...Every society contains a number of prejudiced people who hold irrational, rigid views and are not open to reason, but we do not believe that the majority of English people belong to this group. They may hold unfavourable opinions...but these attitudes are not based on doctrines of racial superiority and they are susceptible to reason and an appeal to a sense of fair

play.'26

The Report discussed the need to absorb the immigrants, but its sympathy lay mainly with the ideal of integration, although this word was not defined:

'We do not believe that the immigrants should be called upon to integrate completely if they do not wish to, but mutual respect and tolerance are essential and so is an end to racial discrimination. The immigrants must be helped and advised and both they and the host community must be educated to liberalise their views and increase their understanding of each other's background and problems.'27

The Report concluded by calling for government action to publicise the real facts about immigration:

'Much racial tension and discrimination has sprung from ignorance of foreign cultures allied with social conflicts caused by poor conditions. It goes without saying that the Government must press ahead with energetic policies to improve social conditions. We consider that it is also the Government's duty to make an effort to dispel this ignorance, emphasise the true facts about immigration and immigrants and unequivocally discredit prejudice and discrimination. This will require a national educational programme through the mass media, supported by anti-discrimination legislation.'28

Such action should be taken soon, the Report asserted, or 'relationships and conditions are more likely to deteriorate than to improve if action on a wide front is delayed'.29 Jeremy Thorpe made a major speech on immigration at the September 1965 Annual Conference. He supported the recommendation of the Liberal Working Party on Immigration, that Britain was capable of absorbing 50-70,000 immigrants per year.30 Thorpe argued that the Party

had opposed the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act because of the way it was introduced, for 'no-one... advocates completely free entry'.³¹ He was clear about the social reasons for racial problems:

'Housing unquestionably presents the greatest social problem and cause of racial friction'.³² 'We recognise the real social problems which cause friction in Britain, such as housing, health and education. These we believe can be overcome. In short, the way to end racial prejudice is to remove its causes.'³³

Thorpe was anxious throughout his speech to argue that the Party's policy had not changed; the normally sympathetic Guardian noticed certain changes, however. An editorial reminded Liberals that in 1962 they had been totally opposed to controlling New Commonwealth immigration, and suggested that, 'We have all yielded a little to the pressures which made themselves felt at Smethwick'.³⁴

The 1965 Liberal Party Assembly agreed a resolution about immigration which reflected the sentiments of Jeremy Thorpe's speech. The resolution began, 'This Assembly recognises that immigrants have played a vital role in the political, economic and artistic life in this country throughout our whole history...' and proposed that:

'financial assistance from central Government sources be granted to help with housing in areas where there is an acute housing shortage, thus enabling local authorities to enforce their statutory powers to prevent overcrowding' and that 'special provisions be made to care for the health of the immigrants'. The Conference 'deplored the restrictions on the issue of vouchers contained in the Government's White Paper on Immigration as retrograde and cowardly' and hoped that 'the granting

of vouchers to Commonwealth citizens shall continue to be regulated by the availability of jobs or possession of skills'.³⁵

The Liberal Party warmly supported Labour's 1965 Race Relations Act, although it argued that the Act was not sufficiently powerful or comprehensive. Jeremy Thorpe spoke for the Liberals during the Second Reading of the Bill. He argued that the first object of the Bill should be to act as a symbol of education and persuasion, and that 'it should... indicate the view that we as a nation take of racial discrimination'.³⁶

The Liberal 1966 General Election Manifesto reflected the policies of the 1965 Liberal Immigration Group Report and the 1965 Annual Conference resolution on immigration. Headlined as 'A Non Racialist Approach to Immigration', the section set out Liberal policy in some detail:

'We believe that immigrant entry to this country should be regulated by the availability of jobs or the possession of skills and not fixed at an arbitrary figure bearing no relation to vacancies.

The problems connected with immigration have aroused tremendous emotion. No-one should minimise the social problems created. But clearly anyone who reflects upon the work of doctors and nurses in our hospitals, employees in our transport services, and many other industries, will recognise the significant contribution which immigrants are making to our society.

We appreciate that integration is not always easy and, in order that the full contribution of the immigration may be realised, more steps must be taken at national and local level to provide facilities for non-English speaking immigrants to improve their knowledge of English

and the British way of life. There must be a closer co-ordination of action at national and local level to promote racial harmony.

Above all, the 'immigrant problem' is a problem of housing. Special subsidies must be made available to local authorities in areas of acute housing shortage.'³⁷

The Liberal Party reacted strongly to Labour's proposal to limit further immigration, particularly Asian immigration from East Africa, through the provisions of what became the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act. This was the first occasion in the race debate when the Labour and Liberal Parties were seriously at odds over race policies. In 1962 they had both opposed the Conservative 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act. By 1965 both parties had changed their policies and were in favour of immigration controls. Dispute in 1965 between Labour and the Liberals was over the number of immigrants to be allowed into Britain rather than over the principle of controls as such.

The Labour Party's move via the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act to limit immigration further was bitterly attacked by leading Liberals, who tried to uphold traditional liberal values on the matter. Liberal Party opposition to the Bill became a rallying point for bodies such as the churches and voluntary agencies.³⁸ However, Liberal Party leaders were helped by the fact that they were not in office and did not have the responsibility of government. Had they been in office, it is likely that they also would have been subjected to the same electoral

pressures as the Labour Party. Alone among the three major parties, Liberal Party leaders spoke out against the new immigration controls. However, this opposition was not popular with many rank and file Liberals. There were severe tensions in the Party between the London leadership and the constituency associations, particularly in the West Midlands. On immigration control, the policy of the West Midlands' Liberals was virtually indistinguishable from that of the Conservative Party.³⁹

The Liberal Party Council passed a resolution condemning the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Bill, and stated that:

'This Liberal Party Council condemns and disassociates itself from the hysteria which has arisen over the arrival of Kenyan Asians in this country. It condemns the Conservative Party politicians who have aroused the hysteria...it condemns the Government for taking panic measures under Conservative pressure, for taking a purely racialist line, and for breaking faith with British citizens.'⁴⁰

In Parliament, David Steel led the Liberal attack on the Bill. He argued that it was changing the law retrospectively and that Kenyan Asians were not receiving equal treatment before the law.⁴¹ He lamented the:

'lack of any positive immigration policy over many years. Every time that we have immigration legislation in this House...it is always negative legislation...there is no positive legislation'.⁴²

This, Steel argued, compared badly with Holland, where a "positive social programme" ⁴³ had helped immigrants to settle.

'We have never done any of that. We have built up a

series of disasters for ourselves which not be solved by legislation against racial discrimination. I am all in favour of that - it will help - but unless we tackle the serious social problems we will not dispel the racial feelings which are beginning to grow in this country.'44

Every time a social problem occurred, Steel suggested, '...we increase racial feeling and tension and we build up the problems'.45 The Government must act, he said, to tackle the social problems: 'I recognise that a serious social problem has been built up through lack of policy and that we must tackle it'.46

Liberal Party leaders were at one with the Labour Party and much other political opinion in condemning Enoch Powell's 1968 "rivers of blood" speech. Powell's views expressed in this and other speeches on immigration appear to have been perceived as a major threat to liberal values as they stood. The Liberal Party rose to this challenge and condemned Powell's views most forcefully. The Party Council passed a resolution 'deploring the hysteria caused by Enoch Powell's speech...(and)...reaffirms its determination to overcome racialism'.47 And yet the Liberal Party was rent with divisions similar to those in the Labour and Conservative Parties over Powell's views.48 Put bluntly, Powell's views were very popular, as Jeremy Thorpe acknowledged, writing in Liberal News about Powell:

'The fact that many people appear to share his views makes it all the more reprehensible that a responsible Tory spokesman should inflame racial prejudice in the way he has.'49

Dr Michael Winstanley, the Liberal parliamentary spokesman on Home Office affairs, in a speech in May 1968 said, 'The Liberal Party support the present strict controls on immigration'.⁵⁰ The Party had travelled a long way since its stance in 1962, in response to the unpopularity of uncontrolled immigration from the New Commonwealth.

The Liberal Party was on happier ground on issues of race relations, and it warmly welcomed Labour's 1968 Race Relations Bill. Dr Michael Winstanley spoke for the Liberal Party at the Second Reading in the Commons, and was clear about the purpose of the Bill: 'We are discussing what can be done by the use of the law to ensure that they (black Britons) have equal rights and equal opportunities as equal citizens'.⁵¹ Politicians must, he said, be firm in this area:

'There are certain areas of politics in which it is essential to give a clear lead. When we are in this kind of territory, and we are with this Bill...(we must get)...what is often objected to, a consensus...the racial problem is one upon which we cannot afford to equivocate. It is a problem which must be solved.'⁵²

Winstanley strongly supported the need for moral persuasion and education of the populace: 'I believe it absolutely essential in this crucial field of human activity that the Government, the State, Parliament, this House, should give a lead and set a good example'.⁵³ He concluded his speech by expressing his hope that successful race relations measures would produce a strong, diverse community in the

future:

'I hope that the Bill will get a Second Reading and, having got it, I hope that things will settle down in the country. I think they will and that people will slowly learn to work together. I hope that we shall not try to slide the problem under the carpet. Part of the strength of this nation lies in the diversity of the communities which make it up, and the richness of the world lies in the diversity of its peoples. Each has his or her particular contribution to make. Let us enrich our community by absorbing these many different types of people and by seeing that all enjoy equal rights.'⁵⁴

The Liberal Party supported Labour's 1969 legislation to provide help for areas of social need, in some of which immigrants were concentrated. Labour's policy initiative stemmed from Harold Wilson's speech in reply to Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech. Just as Labour were anxious to stress that areas of social need were to get help, rather than immigrants per se, so Liberals agreed with them. Michael Winstanley again spoke for the Liberal Party on the Bill, affirming that the Party supported the proposals, but with some reservations:

'We, on this bench, support the Bill, but we regret its necessity. We regret that there are areas of special need that require special help. That there are these areas of special need is, in a way, a criticism of both the local and central government systems'.⁵⁵

The Liberal Party, he stated, were anxious that New Commonwealth immigrants should not be seen as problem people:

'...we regret most of all the wide and automatic assumption that an area is an area of special need purely because of the presence of immigrants. I agree that in

an area of special need the presence of immigrants causes tensions and anxieties to be exaggerated, especially if shortages exist in housing and employment. I hope that nobody outside the House will assume that special help needs to be given to areas because immigrants are in some way doing damage to them. It is necessary to comment, as other Honourable Members have, upon the contribution that these immigrants have made.'56

Winstanley concluded his speech by quoting from a letter the Bishop of Stepney had written to The Times. The sentiments of the letter had touched Winstanley deeply, and he wanted it widely publicised, particularly the Bishop's argument that Britain's colonial history and involvement in the slave trade left her in a morally vulnerable position, so that Britain

'has a massive debt to repay; and it will take her generations to repay it. In place of our arrogant assumptions let us turn in penitence and very swiftly to the task of reparation'.57

Winstanley then added:

'This measure, giving special help to certain areas, will help these people and thus go some way to repay the debt. It is in that spirit that my Honourable friends and I support it.'58

It is evident that popular feeling, Enoch Powell and internal divisions within the Liberal Party had pushed its policy from desiring no controls on New Commonwealth immigration in 1962, to support for "strict controls" and measures to improve race relations by 1968. A comprehensive Liberal policy document published in 1969 provides a good guide to its values at the end of a turbulent decade in this area of politics: in Liberals Look

Ahead, the Party outlined its ideas for the coming decade. It contained an implicit rejection of Powell's views and emphasised the manner in which the subject of immigration should be approached:

'The issue must be approached calmly and sympathetically. The responsible citizen has to find the courage to say what he thinks to be right, even though it may be politically unpopular...We have now to deal with the situation as we find it. That requires first of all a dispassionate examination of the facts.'59

The arrival in Britain of immigrants had, the Report acknowledged, created a challenge to British society, and

'the task of meeting that challenge is made more difficult by speeches which have played on emotions and fears. That they have had this effect cannot be doubted...At the same time, the endless public discussion about immigration, carried on as if those who came to live here have no human feelings, or alternatively, are all blind and deaf, has had the effect of retarding the process of integration.'60

The Report indicated the role of the Liberal Party in this:

'It is clearly up to the Liberals to stand firm against displays of illogical and irrational emotion and to work for the speedy integration of this latest immigrant addition to our population.'61

Equality was seen as an essential in race relations:

'It is a hallmark of a Liberal society that no one should be discriminated against on account of their race, colour, creed or sex. Liberals cannot be content to live in a society which denies to some citizens equal treatment on individual merits in education, training, employment, financial credit and, of course, equal treatment before the law and in demographic participation.'62

The Report believed that future policy should be based on

the ideal of integration rather than assimilation:

'We do not expect or require assimilation. Those who come to this country have every right to maintain their culture and religion if they so wish, and we must respect their wishes and they should respect ours. The maintenance and development of national and group cultures reassures both the newcomers and the natives. The aim is not to make everyone alike, but to ensure that there is the maximum of tolerance and the minimum of discrimination.'⁶³

The challenge of ensuring good community relations lay ahead, the Report stated, but was nevertheless optimistic:

'If, however, we can make a success of community relations in this country the respect that we shall gain will greatly enhance Britain's role in the world. We cannot opt out of this challenge'.⁶⁴ Whilst this Liberal policy document reveals a number of liberal values of the time, it was less clear about a definite limit on immigrant numbers. It preferred instead to allow the available amount of social services and provision to limit numbers. The Times, in a leading article, noted the lack of reference to controlling numbers and concluded, 'Hard headed it is not'.⁶⁵

In common with the other major parties, the Liberal leadership made little of race issues during the 1970 General Election campaign.⁶⁶ The Liberal Party Manifesto did not mention immigration, probably because the issue was so controversial and had threatened the Party's unity in the 1960s. However, the Conservatives' proposal to limit immigration further, foreshadowed in their election manifesto, stung the Liberal Party into action. David

Steel, commenting on the 1971 Commonwealth Immigration Bill, said that it was 'blatantly racist' and 'quite unacceptable to all Liberals'.⁶⁷ Jeremy Thorpe said of the Bill. 'This blatantly racist Bill is a flagrant concession to Powellism, an insult to the Commonwealth and an attack on human rights'.⁶⁸ Together with the Labour Party, the churches and the race relations bodies, the Liberal Party opposed the Conservatives' 1971 Commonwealth Immigration Control Act. The Party Council passed a resolution that:

'This Council of the Liberal Party condemns the Government's Immigration Control Bill as a concession to prejudice, a stimulus to bad race relations and an attack on individual freedom. In particular, Liberals are totally opposed to Clause 2, which confers a "right of abode" based implicitly on a racial classification and to the whole tone of the Bill which implies that immigration is bad for the host country...This Bill...will exacerbate the feelings that provoke political and social tension and breakdowns in law and order.'⁶⁹

In the House of Commons, David Steel spoke strongly against the Bill, which he considered to be 'clearly racist'.⁷⁰ Its effect would be to treat immigrants differently from the indigenous population: 'The fact is that once they are here these people will not under this legislation be treated as equals before the law, but quite differently'.⁷¹ Steel saw the Bill as a sop to anti-immigrant sentiments:

'This is a naked attempt to assuage passions which are, I hope only temporarily, aroused in the country and among certain elements in the House. We, and by that I mean Honourable Members of all parties, should fight against them.'⁷²

Liberal opposition to the Bill was particularly fierce in the House of Lords. More than fifty amendments to the Bill were tabled, resulting in several changes supporting the rights of immigrants in Britain.

Two Liberal Party publications in 1973 and 1974 reveal the direction in which Party policy was moving at the time. Forward with the Liberals in 1973 emphasised that the nature of debate and discussion about immigration and race issues should be changed:

'We emphasise that the first step towards any satisfactory policies is to banish the false logic which sees immigration as a threat to be controlled and thus allowing the issue to be manipulated by populist politicians. If we do not change the nature of the discussion which has held sway for the last ten or twelve years, there is a great risk that we shall be faced with yet another slide towards irrationality and inhumanity, and a new measure of control to "cut back the numbers of immigrants"...We must establish the serious economic and social questions as the real area of debate.'73

This policy document also revealed the Liberal attitude towards race relations:

'As a long term goal for a nation of multi-racial communities, our aim should be to create a society based on Cultural Pluralism (italics in the original) where groups can maintain their own traditions so long as they do not dislocate the common functioning of society. Such a society is based on a recognition that, by the exchange of insights, not only can different cultures exist, together, but they can also interact positively to create a richer, more tolerant and understanding society.'74

In 1974 the Liberal Party's Panel on Immigration and Race and Community Relations published its second report, and David Steel wrote a supportive introduction to it.⁷⁵ Since

this report was only the second major policy document the Liberals had produced in this area, it is worth reviewing it in some detail. The Report called for regulation of immigration rather than its control; "regulation", as the Report suggested, had more positive connotations than "control".⁷⁶ Immigration should be regulated by the needs of the economy and the availability of social provision rather than arbitrary numerical control. The Report reaffirmed the benefits which immigrants brought to Britain:

'We believe that, on balance, immigration is beneficial and that immigrants have made a valuable contribution in our past. If we are to develop and maintain a dynamic, outward looking society in the future, we need the knowledge, experience and diversity of our immigrant communities. The effect of shutting our doors to immigrants, rejecting the contribution they can make to our life, and closing ourselves inside a static society, would be detrimental to our own development as a nation,'⁷⁷

The Report was also noteworthy for the detailed way in which it outlined the Liberal ideal of the multi-racial society. Under the heading "Long Term Goal", it set out Liberal policy:

'Pervading all these very specific concerns is the basic question of what kind of a society we are trying to create for a national or multi-racial communities.'

In general terms, the alternatives in our society are seen to be:

- (i) Assimilation, where everybody is expected to behave in the same way

- (ii) Cultural pluralism, where groups can maintain their own traditions, as long as they do not dislocate the common functioning of the society, and
- (iii) Structural separation, where groups lead completely independent lives other than at a basic economic level.

We firmly believe that only the second possibility-cultural pluralism - offers an acceptable basis for British policy. This means that the immigrant must be free to choose what degree of integration he wishes to achieve with the host society and what links he wishes to retain with the culture of his own ethnic group. A truly free choice means that he must have the technical ability to communicate and move in British society but also that the survival of the ethnic cultures must be ensured. This is not to say that those wishing and having the capacity to become assimilated should not be able to do so, it is rather to recognise that cultural roots are not easily cut, and a healthy society is not created when this is done by compulsion. It also recognises that by the exchange of insights not only can different cultures exist together, they can interact positively to create a richer, more tolerant and understanding society. It is important that the concept of pluralism should be accepted as widely as possible by people in Britain and particularly by groups having close contact with immigrant groups and mixed communities, such as school teachers, welfare workers and police. The future direction of policies designed to facilitate cultural pluralism and improve community relations will have a crucial bearing on whether we succeed in this task.'78

The rise in support for the National Front in the mid-1970s saw the Liberals, along with the Labour Party, the churches and race relations bodies, very active in trying to counter the Front's views and activities. The Liberals, as the small third party in British politics, were particularly vulnerable to the National Front's successes.

For example, in Bradford's 1976 Metropolitan election, the National Front fielded 22 candidates, who in most wards polled more votes than the Liberal candidates.⁷⁹ The 1976 Liberal Party Assembly condemned the National Front and other similar organisations, and stated that:

'This Assembly...condemns the Government for its failure to tackle the problem of urban deprivation, particularly severe for ethnic minorities living in inner city areas, and presses Her Majesty's Government to initiate a massive programme of urban aid and renewal to eradicate the factors which lead to racialism. We support the aims of the Race Relations Bill 1976 with particular emphasis on the need to end racial discrimination at work, which deprives many of the opportunity to use to the full their skills and talents to the community benefit... Assembly supports attempts to liberalise religious education in schools, especially primary schools, in a way which acknowledges the existence of a multi-faith society'.⁸⁰

The Assembly was anxious about the reporting of race matters by the media:

'This Assembly is concerned by the tendency of sections of the media to disseminate sensational and inflammatory material on racial issues and endorses the NUJ's campaign for fairer and more accurate reporting.'⁸¹

The Liberal Party supported Labour's 1976 Race Relations Act and Alan Beith was the Party's main spokesman during the debate on the Bill in the Commons. He said that the Party welcomed the Bill, but believed that it did not go far enough. Liberals wanted more action to correct the racial disadvantage which the Government had identified in its 1975 White Paper, Racial Discrimination:

'Action must be taken to combat the disadvantage experienced by many people in minority communities - real

disadvantage, not merely discrimination.'82

Unless more money was spent on the Urban Aid Programme, Beith argued, this disadvantage was unlikely to be reduced. He concluded his speech by arguing that the Government should work particularly in this area, since:

'... a time of national economic crisis is a testing time for the whole community. It puts severe pressures on minorities and their relationships with the majority community. It is very important at this time that the black citizen, particularly the young black citizen growing up, should have a feeling that this is his country - a country to which he can owe allegiance, for which he is prepared to fight, if necessary, and whose future he is prepared to build. If he does not have that confidence, it is not he alone who suffers but the whole community of the United Kingdom.'83

A 1978 policy document, Your Future with the Liberals repeated the Liberals' concern over the living conditions of many black Britons:

'Ethnic minorities are often concentrated in the deprived inner city areas and many do low paid, low status jobs and live in sub-standard housing. The prime need is to tackle the disadvantage and discrimination which minority communities suffer. The lack of employment opportunities has caused people to seek scapegoats for our economic failures. We should expand our urban aid programme and employ many local people to revitalise decayed urban areas and give hope to the community.'84

The Party's general policy in this area was clear from this publication: 'Liberals are opposed to any form of racial discrimination in immigration policy', and '...believe in the continuance of a multi-racial society, with equal opportunity for all'.85

The 1979 Liberal Party General Election manifesto

attacked the Conservative Party's stand on immigration. The Conservatives were committed to implementing legislation, if they were elected, to codify Britain's nationality practice, and many opponents of such legislation saw these proposals as disguised measures for immigration control. Mrs Thatcher had gained some notoriety in 1978 by inferring that Britain was in danger of being "swamped" by immigrants, but opinion polls showed a large and immediate gain in support for the Conservatives following this speech (see Chapter Five below). With these events only recently in the past, it was no accident that the Liberal Party's manifesto affirmed that 'Liberals deplore the Tory policy of inflaming people's fears about unrestricted immigration'.⁸⁶ The manifesto also reaffirmed the Liberals' belief in the value of a diverse and plural society. Under the heading 'Minority Rights', the manifesto stated that:

'Britain is a diverse and multi-cultural society and Liberals rejoice in its richness, which owes much to the peoples of many different ethnic origins and cultures who have chosen to live here. We defend their right to maintain and develop their own traditions. Minority groups must be allowed to practise and advocate their beliefs, provided this does not reduce the freedom of others. We will protect and defend the rights of minorities...'87

The editorial 'Opinion' column in Liberal News, the Party's newspaper, showed similar sentiments: black Britons, 'Far from being a burden... are essential to the nation's survival. That's what the public must be told again and

again'.⁸⁸ In common with the Labour Party, the churches and race relations bodies, the Liberals strongly opposed the Conservative 1981 British Nationality Bill. David Steel, speaking in the Commons, argued that the Bill:

'is the latest in a long line of rather shabby measures which are reducing the basic rights of and discriminating against ethnic minorities, from the 1968 Act through the 1971 Act and various rules and regulations...it is racist in its effect and in the implementation of its terms. The people discriminated against are overwhelmingly from ethnic minorities. The Bill is an attempt to massage our nationality legislation to suit immigration policy.'⁸⁹

The other major debate over racial issues in 1981 concerned the Brixton riots. The Liberal Party welcomed Lord Scarman's report following the riots, William Pitt speaking for the Party during the Commons debate on the Report. He said that the riots were a practical problem, for which there were three solutions:

'The first is cash. There are no stresses such as those in Railton Road, in prosperous areas. The leafier suburbs of my constituency, for example, have never faced the tensions of Brixton. We have to have a programme from the Government of positive investment in and encouragement of employment and house building across the spectrum and in education and health. That is the first part of the programme.'⁹⁰

The second solution was to improve policing in these areas, and the third:

'perhaps the most important factor in the equation is that we must have a moral commitment from the Government to a multi-racial society. This must be shown in more than mixed cricket teams or ethnic concerts with music and dancing, or in saying how much the influx of Commonwealth immigrants has enhanced our culinary

achievements. We must give the people who have come from our former colonies to become British citizens a sense of justice. We must give them the feeling that they can have faith in the police force and in the forces of justice and order. They must know that their questions will be answered, their complaints dealt with and their problems looked into on absolutely the same basis as their white brethren.'91

Conclusion

Although it was never the major party of government during the period of study, the Liberal Party has been active in stating its views on immigration and race relations issues. The Liberals moved with the Labour Party, the churches and race relations bodies from opposition to control on immigration in 1962, to support for controls in 1965. Its policy on race relations had been to support the various race relations Acts and to favour the creation of a multi-racial society. Together, these policies can be seen as central to the liberal tradition's response in the politics of race.

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14. This analysis is supported by David Steel in No Entry (London, Hurst, 1969) p. 51.
15. Sunday Post 18.3.1962
16. Deakin, Op. cit.
17. The Times 14.9.1963
18. Liberal Assembly 1963 (London, Liberal Party, 1963) p. 14.
19. 1964 Liberal Party General Election Manifesto in F.W.S. Craig Op. Cit. p. 280.
20. 'Immigration: Report of the Liberal Immigration Group' in Current Topics Vol. 4, July 1965, pp.3-31. The Liberal Party leadership were very enthusiastic about the Report. See 'Campaign Bulletin' Liberal Party Organisation No. 27, 1.7.1965.
21. 'Immigration: Report of the Liberal Immigration Group' Op.cit. p.4.
22. Ibid. p. 23.
23. Ibid. p. 30.
24. Ibid. p. 3.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid. p.21.

27. Ibid. p. 24.
28. Ibid. p. 30.
29. Ibid. p. 29.
30. Jeremy Thorpe, speech 24.9. 1965, Liberal Party Assembly.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. The Guardian 25.9.1965. The Liberal Party's move from a policy of hostility to immigration control to one of acceptance of controls, together with an account of divisions in the Party on the issue is given in Deakin, Op. cit.
35. Liberal Assembly 1964 and 1965 (London, Liberal Party, 1965) p. 12-13.
36. Hansard Vol. 711, Col. 995.
37. For All the People, (London, Liberal Party, n.d. [1966]) p. 9.
38. David Steel, No Entry, Op. cit. p. 172.
39. Deakin, Op. cit.
40. Council Resolution 68, C.1.1. See Ian Hopton Directory of Liberal Party Resolutions 1967-78 (London, New Gladstone Press, 1978) p. 17.
41. Hansard Vol. 759, Col. 1285-9. Steel discusses from a Liberal perspective the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act and the events leading up to it, in David Steel, Op. cit.
42. Hansard Vol. 759, Col. 1290.

43. Ibid.
44. Ibid. Col. 1291.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid. Col. 1292.
47. Council Resolution 68. C.2.4. Hopton Op. cit. p.17.
48. Deakin, Op. cit.
49. Jeremy Thorpe in Liberal News 30.4.1968.
50. Speech, 24.5.1968.
51. Hansard Vol. 763, Col. 116.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid. Col. 119.
54. Ibid. Col. 121.
55. Hansard Vol. 774, Col. 1150.
56. Ibid. Col. 1151.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Liberals Look Ahead: The Report of the Liberal Commission, 1970 (London, Liberal Party, n.d. [1969])
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60. Ibid. p.56.
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67. Liberal News 4.3.1970.
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71. Ibid. Col. 114.
72. Ibid. Col. 116.
73. Forward with the Liberals (London, Liberal Party, 1973).
74. Ibid.
75. Immigration: Report of the Liberal Party Panel on Immigration, Race and Community Relations (London, Liberal Party, 1974). The Report's arguments are echoed in Alan Beith's article 'A New Immigration Policy for Britain' in Contemporary Review, Vol. 225, No. 1304, September 1974, pp.121-126. The Panel's earlier report was published in 1965. See reference 20 above.
76. Immigration: Report of the Liberal Party Panel on Immigration, Race and Community Relations Op. cit. p. 12.
77. Ibid. p.11.
78. Ibid. p. 26.
79. See Resolution 76. C.3.2. in Hopton, Op. cit. p. 19.
80. Resolution 76.A.7. Ibid p.20.
81. Ibid.
82. Hansard, Vol. 906, Col. 1606.
83. Ibid. Col. 1608.
84. Your Future with the Liberals (London, Liberal Party, n.d. [1978]) p.25.
85. Ibid. pp.24-5.

86. The Real Fight for Britain (London, Liberal Party, n.d. [1979]) p. 8.
87. Ibid. p. 9.
88. Liberal News 21.8.1979.
89. Hansard Vol. 997, Col. 958.
90. Ibid. Vol. 1062, Col. 1062.
91. Ibid. Col. 1063.

Chapter Three: Race Relations Bodies

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the attitudes and values which have been supported by government-inspired initiatives to create racial harmony. The response of successive British governments, both Conservative and Socialist, to large-scale New Commonwealth immigration took two forms: immigration control, and measures to promote racial harmony. Immigration control was the easier task of the two, since policy could be expressed in a numerical form, and success or failure could be measured against that standard. In spite of allegations of widespread illegal immigration and controversy about the numbers of immigrants who could be allowed into Britain, the principle of immigration control was fairly easily handled by central government. The creation of racial harmony was more complex. One major problem, as this chapter indicates, was that the indigenous population was largely perceived to be hostile both to New Commonwealth immigration and to good race relations. In addition, the concept of "good race relations" was far from clear: was it merely an absence of hostility or riots, or a presence of carnivals and ethnic entertainments, or a ready mixing of groups from all cultures? Attempts to quantify good race relations centred around ideas of equality; unequal performance of

minority racial group members was often seen as a product of poor race relations. However, the evidence is unclear as to whether equality was envisaged as equality of outcome of all racial group members, or whether it meant equality in housing and employment opportunities.

Difficulties with race relations led to the promotion of racial harmony being delegated in the main to governmental bodies such as the Race Relations Board and the Commission for Racial Equality. These organisations were created with particular purposes in mind, and these purposes are discernible from the legislation, and the debates on legislation, which created these bodies. Once established, these bodies produced annual reports of their activities and made policy recommendations; such reports naturally reveal the values upon which they were founded. A special case in this area, since it was a single enquiry, is Lord Scarman's report on the Brixton riots of 1981. This report is considered here because its policies and recommendations appear to fit closely with the tradition of the government-sponsored institutions and prevailing attitudes of the time.

The policies and values evident in these reports fall clearly into the liberal tradition identified in this study. Naturally, since the aims of these groups has been mainly to help black Britons, a liberal stance was a prerequisite for their policy and philosophy.

Conservative values of race politics would have been unlikely to foster the same policies. These race relations institutions were initiatives taken mainly by Labour governments, and became strongly associated with liberal views on racial matters. This association was reflected in appointments to these bodies: Mark Bonham Carter, for example, an ex-Liberal MP and publisher of books by Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins (himself known as a strong liberal on racial issues), was at different times head of both the Community Relations Commission and the Race Relations Board; whilst the first head of the Commission for Racial Equality was David Lane, well known as a liberal conservative. Lord Scarman was also known for his liberal views before undertaking the 1981 Enquiry.

During the 1950s, when large-scale immigration first began from the New Commonwealth, governments did little or nothing to help the newcomers settle. This task was left to any voluntary bodies which cared to concern themselves; government-created institutions did not exist.¹ In 1962 a pattern was begun which was to be repeated in 1965 and 1968: an immigration control measure was enacted, and at the same time, a body was created to work towards better race relations. Government policy in the race area became one of support, both for tighter immigration control, and race relations measures. The two policies were seen as being interlinked, and good race relations as being

impossible unless immigration was controlled.² In 1962, this pattern took the form of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act and the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council (CIAC) was formed.³ The CIAC's annual reports cover the period 1962-5 and provide a useful insight into how policy and ideas about race relations and immigration were developing at this time. The CIAC's terms of reference included advising the Home Secretary how best to provide for the 'integration into the community' of the immigrants.⁴ At the same time, the CIAC was to investigate the efforts of local authorities 'to assist immigrants to adapt themselves to British habits and customs'.⁵ In view of the way in which race policies moved from aims of assimilation, through integration to pluralism, such terms of reference are significant. The CIAC's first report concerned housing, poor housing conditions being seen as the root of many of the problems in this area:

'We would again emphasise the importance we attach to improving the housing conditions of immigrants. Bad conditions and the exploitation that can go with them, provide an obvious source of social tension. Their improvement is essential in the interests of the whole community quite as much as in the interests of immigrants. Moreover, we have been increasingly struck by the fact that so many other problems which have come to our notice stem from the housing problem.'⁶

Central government and local authorities had an obligation, the report argued, to do more than they were:

'They should try to influence the public attitude

towards immigrants to reduce the misunderstanding and hostility, which undoubtedly exists on both sides, to a greater degree than appears obvious on the surface. The problem of the public attitude to immigrants is one of great seriousness which will not be solved merely by the improvement of living conditions, however desirable this may be. There is a need for wider education of both the indigenous and immigrant groups in learning tolerance towards each other.'⁷

The CIAC's second report was largely concerned with education and information, though some of its general comments are also revealing. On the subject of education, the CIAC stated:

'A national system of education must aim at producing citizens who can take their place in society properly equipped to exercise and perform duties which are the same as other citizens...a national system cannot be expected to perpetuate the different values of immigrant groups.'⁸

Again, the CIAC emphasised the social problems produced by immigration:

'An influx of this size and type with this degree of concentration, could hardly have failed to produce social problems, and these problems are acute in certain fairly limited areas.'⁹

The Committee believed that many people did not realise that Britain was in the process of becoming a multi-racial society:

'The presence of these citizens [black Britons] here means that British society is increasingly becoming a multi-racial society. This fact may seem obvious but it needs stating, for we suspect that many people have not yet realised all the implications.'¹⁰

The CIAC's third report, published in 1964, dealt with immigrant school-leavers and their employment. The Council reiterated its argument that many of the new

immigrants were permanently settled in Britain, and that they should be treated equally. This would be to the benefit of everyone, the Council maintained:

'It is to the advantage of the community as well as a matter of justice to the individual that the talents and abilities of all citizens should be used to the full.'¹¹ The Council did not favour policies of

special

preference, or 'positive' discrimination towards immigrant school-leavers:

'We do not suggest that entry standards should be lowered in favour of immigrants; but when immigrant boys and girls have the same qualifications as other school leavers, and are as well fitted for the job they are seeking, they are entitled to equal opportunities so they can make an equal contribution to society.'¹²

The CIAC's fourth and final report returned to the subject of housing. It dismissed the policy of giving government money to provide housing for immigrants in areas of high immigrant concentration. Such a policy would, in the Council's view, lead to resentment in the indigenous population. However, citing the recommendation of the Milner Holland Report, the Council suggested that if an area was seen as having poor housing, action should be taken to improve it. If there happened to be a large concentration of immigrants in the area, the Committee suggested that this should not inhibit action being taken.¹³ The annual reports of the CIAC provide a valuable insight into how government-inspired race relations philosophy was evolving in the early 1960s, a

period when race relations initiatives were in their infancy in British politics.

The Labour Party, which opposed control of New Commonwealth Immigration in 1962, came to realise how unpopular this was with the electorate as a whole. The result, once Labour had gained office in 1964, was a flurry of activity in race politics. In late 1964, those parts of the 1962 Immigration Act which required annual approval by parliament, were supported by the Labour Party. The 1965 White Paper, Immigration from the Commonwealth heralded further restrictions on immigration from the Commonwealth. As in 1962, these restrictions were accompanied by measures for improved race relations: a new committee was formed, the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants. This legislation, the 1965 Race Relations Act, was the first to promote race relations, and the Race Relations Board was formed to administer the new Act.

The National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants (NCCI) was a more ambitious descendant of the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council. The 1965 White Paper suggested that the aim of the NCCI should be to 'build up a comprehensive body of doctrine which can be flexibly applied to a variety of local situations'.¹⁴ The Labour Party, as suggested in Chapter One, was pursuing at this time a policy of taking racial issues out of politics. It

aimed to create a bipartisan consensus with the Conservatives so that the issues involved in race politics could not be exploited for electoral gain. The appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a non-partisan political figure, as chairman of the NCCI, clearly reflected these political ambitions.¹⁵

The various reports of the NCCI illustrate its political preferences at a time when Government was only beginning to tackle race relations issues, and its desire for moral persuasion, education and action by political leaders to create racial harmony. The NCCI's first report included the Committee's terms of reference, stating that it, 'shall be required to promote and co-ordinate on a national basis efforts directed towards the integration of the Commonwealth immigrants into the community.'¹⁶

The NCCI emphasised that the arrival of identifiable newcomers to any society created tensions, but that 'what happens subsequently is directly related to the kind of lead given by authority and the amount of effort put into educating and assisting both the newcomers and the host society'.¹⁷ The Committee's report noted that hostility to New Commonwealth immigration was considerable, and urged the need for action by political leaders:

'A considerable measure of antipathy, prejudice and resistance has shown itself and it was [by September 1965] becoming clear that without some positive action on the part of the Government and local authorities, the voluntary initiatives [to promote race relations] would prove insufficient.'¹⁸

The NCCI saw itself as a central agent involved in shaping and moulding society into a more co-operative and harmonious community:

'The important work of assessing national policies, bringing new ideas to bear on new situations, changing attitudes and infusing a new spirit into the community life of a country cannot be carried out by a group of individuals alone, however wide their skills and experience may be. The National Committee has from the beginning seen itself as a focal point from which ideas, information and the involvement of others could be generated.'¹⁹

The NCCI was not simply a poodle of the Government: it soon began to generate its own ideas and, as with race relations bodies since, it was critical of Government policies which it deemed to be illiberal. The Labour Government's action to control New Commonwealth immigration further in 1965 was viewed by the Committee as a hindrance to good race relations. The Committee suggested that its work had been hampered by the emotions raised by these control measures.²⁰ The first report of the NCCI concluded with the admission that British society was troubled by New Commonwealth immigration, but that given the correct policy this would be replaced by recognition of the benefits brought by the new arrivals. The Committee suggested that its work

'should result in policies which will transform the present negative picture of a troubled society unable to cope with the concept of heterogeneity to the positive one of a society well-equipped to embrace and benefit from the new elements in it.'²¹

The NCCI's second report repeated the argument that

Britain was deriving benefits from New Commonwealth immigration: 'The newcomers have made and are making an important and valuable contribution to Britain's economic life and have enriched her cultural life'.²² Labour Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins' definition of integration as, "equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance" was supported by the NCCI. The term "integration" led to certain ambiguities, noted by the NCCI; it wrote of itself that:

'the Committee's task, that of "promoting integration", is difficult to define and there are no short answers. Its work in 1966 has been a matter of moving forward on a number of different fronts: ...of helping newcomers to settle into an alien and sometimes hostile society; of educating the host community away from its prejudices; of watching for injustices and taking action against them. In short, the task is one of shaping a new society enriched rather than disturbed by the new elements in it....If it were necessary to sum up in one word the complicated task in hand, that word would undoubtedly be education, in its widest sense.'²³

In a later report, the NCCI acknowledged that it received criticism from several quarters: some critics wanted it to be a radical voice of black Britons, whilst others wanted it to treat the difficult problems of race policies in a gentle and undisturbing manner. The Committee's defence was that its function was 'the monumental task of persuading a society which has become multi-racial in fact that it must also become so in spirit and indeed cannot be tackled by one method alone'.²⁴

The Race Relations Board was established in February

1966, to administer the 1965 Race Relations Act. The Board emphasised that its work and the original legislation were in the common interest and for the common good:

'The law for which we are responsible was passed by Parliament, with the support of members of all parties, because it was considered to be in the interests of society as a whole. If racial discrimination is allowed to become part of the British way of life, so that two classes of citizen emerge, distinguishable by their race, colour or ethnic origin, the whole of our society will be injured. The work of the Board is, therefore, for the protection of the public interest as a whole.'²⁵

Like the NCCI, the Race Relations Board was committed to a philosophy of moral persuasion, education and change in society; in this case, however, the Board was empowered by law. The Board wrote of its support for this philosophy:

'Our belief in the efficacy of the law in the field of race relations, both as a means of changing behaviour and attitudes, and as a stimulant to other activities, is to some extent based on the belief that ours is not a racist society, that attitudes are by no means rigid and that, given a firm and positive lead by the Government, a law that is speedy, simple and credible can make a real contribution to handling a problem that is not confined to this country, but is world-wide in its implications.'²⁶

In common with the NCCI, the Race Relations Board supported integration as defined by Roy Jenkins, and pressed the need for further action to achieve this goal. In the Board's view, the American experience of race relations should alert Britain that failure to act positively would create greater problems:

'...where colour is an element, race relations if left to themselves deteriorate...inertia and inaction in this field solve no problems and merely create greater

problems in the future'.²⁷

The NCCI and the Race Relations Board had been working, in the years 1965-67, during what has been called "the liberal hour".²⁸ This period was a time of broad consensus, created largely by Labour's attempt to defuse the electoral consequences of hostility to New Commonwealth immigration, and this bipartisan approach had enjoyed some success. In such a political climate, race relations bodies did not need to struggle in order to promote liberal values; their recommendations fell on largely fertile ground. However, the events of 1968, the speeches of Enoch Powell and the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act, brought this liberal consensus to an abrupt halt, causing inevitable dismay to both the NCCI and Race Relations Board. The NCCI strongly opposed the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act, and sent a deputation to the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson; some members of the NCCI resigned in protest against the new control measures. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Chairman of the NCCI, issued a statement in which he said that the Act would lead to distrust and harm good race relations.²⁹ An officer of the NCCI was quoted by The Times as saying, 'The Act has put race relations work in Britain back by ten years'.³⁰ Nadine Peppard, Secretary to the NCCI, said of New Commonwealth immigrants and immigration control, 'The problem is not having these people here...the problem is

that we cannot adapt to it well enough or quickly enough'.³¹

The Race Relations Board welcomed, as did the NCCI, the extension of the powers of the 1965 Race Relations Act by the introduction of the 1968 Race Relations Act.³² The 1968 Act also established a new body, the Community Relations Commission (CRC), to replace the NCCI. The Act provided that the major part of the CRC's brief was:

'to encourage the establishment of and assist others to take steps to secure the establishment of, harmonious community relations and to co-ordinate on a national basis the measures adopted for that purpose by others...'³³

Section 28 of the 1968 Act defined community relations as '...relations within the community between people of different colour, race or ethnic or national origin'.³⁴ The CRC's philosophy was very much in the same tradition of the NCCI. The response of the CRC, for example, to the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act was that it had seriously harmed community relations:

'...the strong feelings aroused among the immigrant communities and in circles sympathetic to their interests by the enactment of the Commonwealth Immigration Act have left behind a legacy of suspicion and mistrust which can only add to the difficulty of promoting harmony in community relations.'³⁵

Enoch Powell's entrance in the race debate, particularly his 'rivers of blood' speech of April 1968, together with the speeches of other Conservative MPs opposed to New Commonwealth immigration, were vigorously attacked by the race relations bodies. Powell had broken the liberal

consensus on the subject of immigration and race relations. This consensus had supported the idea of some control of immigration, and race relations measures to help black Britons, and emphasised that Britain was irreversibly a multi-racial society, from which status it derived much benefit. Powell argued that immigration should be halted and that the trend towards a multi-racial society should be stopped by repatriation of immigrants; implicit in his views was the rejection of any idea that being a multi-racial society could benefit Britain. The CRC's Report in 1968 did not mention Powell by name, but no-one could have doubted its references as being to him:

'Certainly also much-publicised statements which were made during the year suggesting that coloured immigrants were an undesirable and burdensome element in the population, and the reaction which these statements inevitably provoke among both the host community and the minority ethnic groups did incalculable harm to the cause of good community relations.'³⁶

Likewise, the Race Relations Board's Report of 1968-9 rejected the Powellite analysis of race politics. As in the CRC's report, Powell was not named, but in the political climate of 1969, the implications of the following argument are clear:

'It is only too easy to play upon the fears of the prejudiced and of those who feel threatened. The task of our society is to identify the real problems associated with migration, to tackle them, and to distinguish from the real problem the myths and stereotypes which are so profoundly damaging.'³⁷

Understandably, the CRC viewed 1968 as being a disappointing year for race relations: the 1968

Commonwealth Immigration Act and the type and quality of debate about racial matters had been detrimental to harmony. The CRC noted that:

'Perhaps the worst feature was that for the first time, opinion in this country appeared to accept as socially acceptable the use of blatantly hostile language in public utterances on the subject of race and minority ethnic groups.'³⁸

Whilst the race relations bodies strongly disagreed with Powellite views and saw them as harming community relations, they did not see the situation as being irremediable. It is of interest that in the same report in which the CRC wrote of its despair at the effect of Powell's vocal opposition, it also formulated new analyses of community relations. Previously, concern had been towards "immigrants", but now it was to be towards all members of the community, regardless of their colour. Whilst this change was always likely to occur as New Commonwealth immigrants and their descendants became black Britons, it is hard not to interpret the CRC's analysis at this time as being any other than a further rebuttal of Powellite views. The CRC, by emphasising the existence of a multi-racial society and of black Britons within it, was implicitly rejecting notions of repatriation. Moreover, by presenting its work as being for the whole community, the CRC was bestowing legitimacy on black Britons as citizens of that community. The CRC wrote of its new policy:

'A further positive development during 1968 was a growing awareness and recognition both in Government circles and among the public at large of the need for a broader approach to the whole subject of the relations between different racial groups and communities in this country. Inevitably, the tendency in earlier years had been to look on this subject primarily in terms of the problems encountered by immigrants trying to settle into a not altogether welcoming society. With the development of knowledge and experience in this field the idea gained ground that what was at issue was not merely the relations of the minority groups with the host community, but even more the inter-relation of all communities in an already existing multi-racial society. Seen from this angle the attitude of the host community and the need for the host community from its side to come to terms with the minority elements in its midst are of crucial importance. This development of the concept of community relations has taken place progressively over the past two or three years. The change in title from National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants to Community Relations Council symbolised the culmination of a process that had started some time back. The National Committee was itself well aware of the unduly restrictive implications of its title and in practice had had no choice but to extend its activities beyond the problems of immigrants to those of the community at large.'³⁹

Implicit in this new policy was a move away from integration as the basis of community relations towards the notion of a group-based plural society. This developing policy was even more evident in the CRC's next annual report which suggested that:

'the Commission recognises that in any society, multi-racial or not, there will be a development of social groupings, on the basis of common interests or ideas. Where the society is multi-racial, many groups will be focused on nationality and culture and this is the situation in Britain today. Such groupings are natural and nobody would wish to see some kind of monolithic society established in the interests of theoretical "integration". In the view of the Commission, integration means the opportunity for all of people of this country to live and work side by side in an atmosphere of mutual trust and tolerance. The Commission therefore hopes that the immigrants and their

children will come to play an increasing role in British public and social life, rather than withdraw into enclosed communities. This country has in the past welcomed people of many diverse nationalities and cultures and its social life has been broadened and enriched thereby. This applies equally to the introduction of coloured citizens from the Commonwealth.'⁴⁰

An emphasis on the need to change society in Britain is evident in several examples of arguments supported by the race relations bodies. The CRC, for example, saw the education of public opinion about race politics as a major role:

'The education of public opinion holds the key to the improvement of community and race relations in Britain. In this sense, the Commission's major role lies in spreading factual information about immigrants, dispelling the myths that arise from time to time, and interpreting the backgrounds and cultures of the various ethnic groups to the host community, and vice versa. This is a continuing task and the Commission, with its limited financial and manpower resources, has to rely very much on the efforts that are being made by others as on the co-operation of the mass media.'⁴¹

The Race Relations Board believed that British society was preventing black Britons from enjoying an equal share of social resources, and predicted that serious consequences would result:

'If, therefore, racial tension in the future is to be avoided it is of the greatest importance to prevent the growth of ghettos and to ensure that coloured people should be able to work in all sectors of the economy for which they are qualified...If prejudice and discrimination excludes the second generation from employment and decent housing on equal terms with their white contemporaries, it will not only mean the waste of a precious economic asset, it will also create major social problems which experience abroad has shown to be of a peculiarly intractable nature.'⁴²

The Board's duty was to administer the 1968 Race Relations

Act and it saw the Act's purpose as producing a major change in society:

'The fundamental purpose of the Act is to eliminate racial discrimination or, put positively, to create throughout our society a situation in which colour, race or ethnic or national origins present no barrier to equal opportunity.'⁴³

In similar vein, the CRC welcomed Labour's Urban Programme, aimed at deprived areas, for the help it might give to black Britons:

'Many of these socially deprived localities have a high concentration of immigrants and the Commission has consequently maintained the closest possible association with the Programme...It likewise welcomed the present Government's decision to continue to expand the Programme, as a contribution towards alleviating social distress and benefitting the entire community in areas of need.'⁴⁴

A recurrent theme in this area of policy was dislike of the nature of public debate about race politics, and dislike of criticism of the role of the race relations bodies. The CRC, since it interpreted its role very much as a persuasive and educative body, repeatedly mentioned in its reports the effects upon society which it believed certain kinds of debate achieved. The 1970 Report of the CRC, for example, commented on its work of spreading information and assessed this as a valuable step towards creating a more tolerant society. It added, however:

'While this is of course encouraging, nevertheless the increase in publicity and in public awareness produced its disadvantages as well as its advantages and to some extent tended to have a boomerang effect. The fact that the spotlight was continually focused on immigrant groups made the Commission's task more difficult. Despite the Act, manifestations of hostility towards

coloured people in certain quarters became more evident and were encouraged by the attitudes of a few politicians. Even if the impact of some of the most reactionary speeches became dimmed through constant repetition, the views expressed attracted considerable support among some sections of the public. They tended to engender among many immigrant groups a deep sense of resentment and mistrust which will not easily be dispelled. All this contributed to the difficulties of promoting harmony and understanding within the community.⁴⁵

Mark Bonham Carter, an ex-Liberal MP, as mentioned above, was appointed Chairman of the CRC on January 1st 1971, in succession to Frank Cousins, an ex-Labour MP and leading trade unionist. Bonham Carter, in a foreword to the first CRC report for which he was responsible, also commented on the role of public discussion and debate:

'It is useless to deny that, since the early sixties, race relations and hence community relations has become a matter of public debate. As a consequence, the Commission has found itself increasingly drawn into matters of political controversy, frequently to our embarrassment. We are by definition a body without party affiliation; our practical work demands the co-operation of bodies and individuals of all political persuasions, but we cannot ignore measures such as, for example, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1968, or the Immigration Bill, 1971, both of which were bound to affect community relations. The Commission has frequently been attacked for saying too much or too little on matters of this kind. We cannot avoid this invidious position when issues affecting our work become matters of political controversy. But in responding to situations of this kind we can only be guided by our own definition of our responsibilities. The same situation confronts community relations councils. They, too, find that political controversy makes their work more difficult because it diverts energy and attention from the practical work on which they are daily engaged.'⁴⁶

The Conservative Government's 1970 General Election Manifesto commitment to restrict further immigration from the New Commonwealth resulted in the 1971 Commonwealth

Immigration Act. This Act was opposed by both the Race Relations Board and the Community Relations Commission, who believed that black Britons would feel less secure in this country as a result of the Act and that good community relations would be harder to achieve.⁴⁷ By the early to middle 1970s, the race relations bodies were growing impatient with what they regarded as their inadequate powers to improve race relations. There was growing evidence that black Britons were the subject of racial discrimination and were not achieving equal social facilities or equal provision in housing or employment.⁴⁸ This growing impatience can be seen, for example, in the Race Relations Board's call for what it termed "affirmative action". Three features of this required affirmative action were:

'A clear statement of intent that equal opportunity will be pursued, regardless of colour or origin, the effective communication of the policy to all who will be involved in its implementation and measures that will allow the implementation of the policy to be effectively monitored.'⁴⁹

The Board discussed possible objections to policies of affirmative action, chief amongst which was its awareness that such policies of favouring minority groups could easily create hostility from the majority. The Board justified its position thus:

'Very often, however, this belief rests on the assumption that special measures give the minority something more than equality, when their objective should be to secure the same rights and opportunities as the majority already enjoy.'⁵⁰

A second objection anticipated by the Race Relations Board was that affirmative action would lead to favoured treatment for black Britons, and this was similarly dismissed:

'This objection ignores the fact that the special measures are undertaken to avoid a more serious and obnoxious form of discrimination: that of treating a person less favourably on grounds of his colour or origin.'⁵¹

The Report also suggested that:

'the responses of too many people are irrational. To regard a man as inferior because of the colour of his skin, for example, is plainly irrational. Unless our society is prepared to recognise the existence of the consequences of such irrationality, and to take steps beyond the enactment of laws to counteract them, the damage to society itself will be great.'⁵²

Again and again, the CRC stressed that more emphasis should be placed upon community relations; it felt that much was lacking in this area:

'The Commission has still to attain a position where it is expected to speak to and be listened to by those who exercise power; it has still to persuade the majority to do what they ought to be doing in any case; it has still to get community relations in a multi-racial society higher on the agenda.'⁵³

The CRC clearly believed that trouble might be brewing for community relations in some city areas:

'It is difficult to assess the trends for better or for worse in our multi-racial society, but most certainly there is no room for complacency or for any confidence that time is on our side. The symptoms of alienation among some young members of minority groups in certain urban areas are there to be seen. Unless positive action is taken quickly the progress is likely to gather momentum.'⁵⁴

It was evident that the CRC feared that matters might be

left to right themselves:

'The history of immigration in this country is proving inexorably that - like the decaying city centres - community relations do not take care of themselves. Urgent and positive policies are needed in all sections of British life.'⁵⁵

The CRC had some difficulties in interpreting its own function and promoting better community relations when the term itself was imperfectly understood, and said of itself that 'its general function - to encourage the establishment of harmonious community relations has never been satisfactorily defined'.⁵⁶ Elsewhere in the same report were remarks indicating that community relations were not rigid, and could even be fragile: 'Community relations depend on public opinion and to a great extent on the way in which this may be shaped by the news'.⁵⁷ The CRC's requirements from society were often very fundamental:

'The only "assistance" [to minority groups] required from the majority is a climate of opinion in which equality of opportunity is a genuine possibility; and the Commission sees as an important part of its function support for the creation of a framework in which minority groups can achieve equal participation for themselves in every field.' ⁵⁸

The CRC's dissatisfaction with its lack of power was clearly evident at this time, together with a fear that cosmetic measures might be taken by governments, which would not lead to equal opportunity as a 'genuine possibility', but merely be a sop to liberal values. What was necessary, in the CRC's view, was an attempt to

'remove some of the tangible inequalities which sour relationships'.⁵⁹ Where these inequalities were great, the community itself was under threat:

'The more tangible part of our work centres around inner city areas. Many, although not all, new immigrants are forced with the poorest of the host community into a cycle of deprivation which constantly arises in the grim surroundings of old city centres - so many that they are in danger of becoming identified with the hardships imposed on them. It is impossible in this field clearly to distinguish between obstacles facing immigrant groups alone, and the problems of the disadvantaged generally; and, without detailed research, to discover the scale of low educational achievement, homelessness, under-employment and unemployment, and possible anti-social behaviour which these circumstances foster.'⁶⁰

The Race Relations Board was also greatly concerned about the effects of inequality and racial discrimination on black Britons. Government was not, in the Board's view, doing enough to alleviate these problems:

'The most critical issue is whether discrimination and unequal treatment are still so widespread in our society that coloured people can never be certain whether they will be treated on their merits as individuals or according to some preconceived prejudices about the groups to which they belong. Much remains to be done to remove such uncertainties...We consider that the Government and local authorities should be more ready to consult with minority group representatives about matters affecting their communities. Government policies should give more positive support to efforts to promote equality of opportunity; and public statements should place more emphasis on the benefits brought by immigrants. Positive leadership by Government is likely to influence public opinion in the right direction and to increase the confidence of minority groups that equal status can be attained.'⁶¹

By the mid-1970s, some moves were afoot to strengthen the 1968 Race Relations Act and to grant the Race Relations bodies more power. The Parliamentary Select Committee on

Race and Immigration, formed in 1969, and a bastion of liberal values on race within parliament, criticised the race relations bodies for their lack of effect on race relations.⁶² The Committee suggested that the Race Relations Board and Community Relations Commission be replaced by a single, more powerful, body. The Labour Government was also committed to stronger race relations legislation, and the result was the 1976 Race Relations Act, which both the Race Relations Board and the Community Relations Commission supported.⁶³

The last annual reports of both the Race Relations Board and the CRC were somewhat in the nature of valedictory statements on race relations in Britain, and are therefore worth citing in some detail. The Race Relations Board argued the need for strong leadership from the Government in racial matters:

'First a counter-attack on the racist elements in society who will not be appeased by what are regarded as the right noises on the coloured immigration issue...The doctrine of repatriation should...be condemned...Obviously many people regret, resent and fear changes in the character of their neighbourhoods which are inevitable when people of different cultures and customs enter, but hostility towards the minorities will increase and strengthen their propensity to remain apart and different. Measures to provide equal opportunity and to facilitate adaptation will have the opposite effect.

Secondly, the widely held myth that the minorities constitute a privileged section of society should be strongly attacked by Government, and not left, as in the past, to be dealt with almost exclusively by the statutory agencies. No matter how much we endeavour to present the arguments rationally and objectively, we are bound by the nature of our purposes to appear to the

public as partisan... In view of the abundant evidence of the underprivileged position of the minorities...the assertion that they enjoy special advantages is ludicrous.

Part of the strength of the myth arises from a genuine but erroneous belief that steps taken to remove the special disadvantages of the minorities give them benefits not available to others. Anti-discrimination legislation and measures to provide equal opportunity, whether in employment or in housing, have raised opposition on these grounds. There is not always a clear appreciation of the distinction between different treatment, to secure equal opportunity, and privileged treatment. As it becomes more widely recognised that special steps are needed to reduce the special disadvantages of minorities, misapprehensions in this area could well increase. Whatever the underlying reasons for the extent and tenacity of the myths, it is clear that they are held by many who by no stretch of the imagination can be regarded as racists. It is to these that the Government should direct a special education effort.'64

Likewise, the Community Relations Commission called for positive action by government to aid community relations. The CRC argued that racial disadvantage should be fought against, particularly 'those disadvantages that stem from discrimination, intolerance and less equal treatment'.⁶⁵ The eradication of this disadvantage required, the CRC suggested:

'changes in public policy generally - unemployment, housing, education, youth and social services; in each of these fields central and local government's position should be the explicit eradication of inequalities based upon colour, race or ethnic or national origins, not only in the legalistic sense, but in terms of positive policies of resource, re-allocation by authorities and special efforts by practitioners.'⁶⁶

Combatting this racial disadvantage led the Commission to support, if only temporarily, positive discrimination based on racial criteria:

'We therefore support the Home Secretary's Advisory Committee on Race Relations Research, which writes...until adequate indications of deprivation become available there remains on linguistic and cultural grounds a prima facie case for giving some weight to racial origin in identifying grounds for positive discrimination.'⁶⁷

This idea was a developing theme in the CRC's philosophy: two years earlier, the CRC had argued that help should be directed at the special needs of black Britons per se. These special needs raised:

'the question of whether needs, which are shown by greater numbers of the indigenous community, but which are proportionally concentrated - by various factors, including discrimination - to a special degree in minority communities, can be met at all adequately through national programmes for the "under-privileged". Unless the special degree of these needs is accepted and catered for, they may simply be swamped in overall policies...we regard as particularly urgent an enquiry into the extent to which the needs of the ethnic minority communities differ from those of the rest of the population in areas of urban deprivation.'⁶⁸

The new body which, as a result of the 1976 Race Relations Act, replaced the Race Relations Board and the Community Relations Commission, was called the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). The new body was to advise the Government on the performance of the 1976 Act, as the Act itself defined its terms of reference, to:

- (a) work towards the elimination of racial discrimination
- (b) promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.⁶⁹

The CRE supported policies which were similar to and in the same tradition as its predecessors. For example, it

too was concerned about the type of discussion which occurred on race issues, and in its 1978 Annual Report, took issue with the way these issues were publicised:

'During the year, too, there was a certain frenzy in public and political debate encouraged by spasms of sensationalism in the media. Renewed controversy over immigration was conducted in extravagant and insensitive terms. Talk about immigrants as if they constituted some kind of plague or threat to the British way of life served to arouse irrational anxieties, made harder the tasks of individuals and organisations trying to do constructive work, and created an attitude of mind leading people to think about colour with hostility. In our First Annual Report we called for a civilised, calm and rational approach to public discussion about immigration because we are aware of its relevance to race relations in Britain. During 1978 other organisations joined us in urging this. It remains a matter of great concern.'⁷⁰

The CRE also viewed the solutions to good race relations in similar terms as their predecessors:

'It is a central and obvious principle of our strategy that good race relations can only be achieved if there is effective action against those factors which contribute to bad race relations, e.g. racial discrimination in employment, housing and service or, worse still, attitudes to racial minorities which amount to condescension or contempt. Apart from racial discrimination and racially discriminatory attitudes, there are areas of public policy which are also vitally important in the work for better race relations. These include the Government's immigration policy, the determination to deal with the disadvantage in the conurbations where a large proportion of ethnic minorities live, and the vigour with which local authorities carry out their responsibility under Section 71 of the Race Relations Act.'⁷¹

The CRC's report for 1979 reflected upon the coming decade, and found it hard to be optimistic about race relations:

'We would like to believe that in twelve months' time our next report will indicate a positive improvement in

race relations, a society united in the task of eradicating the evils of racialism, recognising that all our citizens are entitled to equality of opportunity and that social and racial justice under the law is the right of everyone. As we enter this new decade it is difficult to be optimistic.'⁷²

Prophetically, in the light of the inner city riots which were to occur in 1981, the Report stated:

'If extra public funds cannot be expeditiously diverted into those areas such as unemployment, housing and social services where the black minorities form such a large proportion of the disadvantaged population, small incidents may well lead to further outbreaks of violence, particularly on the part of frustrated black youngsters. It is hardly necessary to point out the detrimental effect which such outbreaks will have on race relations in this country.'⁷³

The CRE reported in 1980 that race relations had continued, despite some good signs, to be a source of concern during the year, since:

'there was new evidence that discrimination in employment, so far from being eliminated, was actually increasing in some areas, and it is clear that many whites still do not accept blacks, even young blacks who were born here, as members of the community in the same way as themselves.'⁷⁴

The Conservatives' proposed British Nationality Act was seen by the CRE as having a negative effect on race relations, and the CRE desired a greater commitment from the Government to race relations initiatives.⁷⁵

The 1981 disturbances in Brixton and elsewhere were the subject of a special enquiry led by Lord Scarman. The philosophy and underlying assumptions of Lord Scarman's report place it within the tradition of liberal values identified in this study.⁷⁶ Lord Scarman placed great

emphasis on the social conditions which existed in Brixton, but believed that

'the social conditions in Brixton - many of which are to be found in other inner city areas - do not provide an excuse for disorder...they are no reason for releasing young black people from the responsibility for public order which they share with the rest of us - and with the police.'⁷⁷

He maintained, however, that at the same time, 'the disorders in Brixton cannot be fully understood unless they are seen in the context of the complex political, social and economic factors to which I have briefly referred'.⁷⁸ Lord Scarman said that the experience of black Britons living in Brixton could not be seen as a "cause" of the riots, but that, 'taken together they provide a set of social conditions which create a predisposition towards violent protest'.⁷⁹

Later in the report, discussing policing techniques, he suggested:

'...while good policing can help diminish tension and avoid disorder it cannot remove the causes of social stress where these are to be found, as those in Brixton and elsewhere are, deeply embedded in the fundamental economic and social conditions.'⁸⁰

Lord Scarman quoted with approval from President Johnson's Address to the Nation which prefaced the 1968 US Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder:

'..."the only genuine, long range solution for what has happened lies in an attack - mounted at every level - upon the conditions that breed despair and violence. All of us know what those conditions are: ignorance, discrimination, slums, poverty, disease, not enough jobs. We should attack these conditions - not because we are frightened by conflict, but because we are fired

by conscience. We should attack them because there is simply no other way to achieve a decent and orderly society in America"...'

Lord Scarman added that 'These words are as true of Britain today as they have been proved by subsequent events to be true of America'.⁸¹ He was in favour of "positive action" to counter the racial disadvantage which he agreed that black Britons were suffering:

'Given the special problems of the ethnic minorities, exposed in evidence, justice requires that special programmes be adopted in areas of acute deprivation. In this respect, the ethnic minorities can be compared with any other group with special needs, such as the elderly, or one-parent families...Certainly special programmes for ethnic minority groups should only be instituted where the need for them is clearly made out. But need must be the criterion, and no other. The principle has already been recognised by Parliament (sections 35, 37 and 38 of the Race Relations Act 1976), and must be made effective.'⁸²

Fighting racial disadvantage, Lord Scarman stated, justified such special help:

'On the social front, I find myself broadly in agreement with the House of Commons Select Committee. The attack on racial disadvantage must be more direct than it has been...A policy of direct coordinated attack on racial disadvantage inevitably means that the ethnic minorities will enjoy for a time a positive discrimination in their favour. But it is a price worth paying if it accelerates the elimination of the unsettling factor of racial disadvantage from the social fabric of the United Kingdom.'⁸³

He believed that such special action should be 'based on an acceptance of them as full and equal members of a culturally diverse society'.⁸⁴ In Lord Scarman's view, 'If the social conditions which underlay the disorders in Brixton and elsewhere are to be corrected', it would be

necessary to:

'involve not just black people, but all the community. both nationally and locally, in a better directed response to these problems. It is essential that people are encouraged to secure a stake in, feel a pride in, and have a sense of responsibility for their own area'.⁸⁵

Government should, in his view, be urged to take 'recognition of and action to meet the special problems and needs of the ethnic minorities'.⁸⁶ Lord Scarman also voiced concern, as other race relations bodies had, over the role of the media, and the quality and content of public debate on the subject of race relations. There was, he argued,

'a need for newspaper editors, television and radio producers and journalists to give continuous attention to the social implications of their awesome power to influence the minds, the attitudes and the behaviour, not only of the reading, viewing and listening public, but also of those whose unlawful behaviour they report'.⁸⁷

The CRE's reactions to the Brixton riots and Lord Scarman's recommendations were evident in its 1981 Report: 'Above all, we believe, Lord Scarman's recommendations need to be implemented in toto and with a greater urgency than has so far been apparent'.⁸⁸ On the riots themselves, the CRE said:

'Our reactions to these riots have been straightforward. We have strongly condemned the violence...Much more needs to be done to tackle the underlying causes and to meet the needs of young people, particularly young blacks, in the inner cities.'⁸⁹

The CRE welcomed Lord Scarman's emphasis on new policing methods, and believed that:

'No less important is Lord Scarman's plea for a more effective attack on inner-city problems and the various social and economic causes of the disturbances which he identified. Here too a more vigorous response by Government and others is called for.'⁹⁰

The CRE Report concluded by outlining its priorities for 1982 and beyond and added:

'Racial discrimination and disadvantage still afflict individuals and debilitate Britain's national life. The urgency of eliminating them, if our society is not to be riven by strife and disorder, was a central message of Lord Scarman's report. This is wholly within Britain's capacity. If we fail in that task or if we are seen to be tackling it too slowly, the modest progress of the last few years could be swept away.'⁹¹

Conclusion

A review of the official reports of the various government-sponsored race relations bodies in the period 1961-81 reveals a broadly developed consensus on New Commonwealth immigration and race relations similar to that held by the leadership of the Labour and Liberal Parties and the churches. At times when, for example, the Labour Government introduced immigration controls, the race relations bodies perceived them to be acting at variance with liberal values, and did not hesitate to attack the Government. In spite of this, it is possible during this period to identify the growth and development of a consensus liberal view towards the politics of race.

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2. See Sheila Patterson, 'Immigrants and Minority Groups in British Society' in Simon Abbott (ed.), The Prevention of Racial Discrimination in Britain (Oxford, OUP, 1971) p.24-5. Simon Abbott, 'The United Kingdom Commonwealth Immigration Act: Right or Wrong' in Migration Today, World Council of Churches, No. 10, April 1968, p.1.
3. Sometimes referred to as the 'Reading Committee' after its Chairman, Lady Reading.
4. Report of the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Committee (CIAC) (London, HMSO, 1963) Cmnd. 2119, p.2.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid. p.6
7. Ibid. p.6-7
8. Second Report of the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Committee (London, HMSO, 1964) Cmnd. 2266, p.5.
9. Ibid. p.3
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11. Third Report of the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Committee (London, HMSO, 1964) Cmnd. 2458, p.3.
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13. Fourth Report of the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Committee (London, HMSO, 1965) Cmnd. 2796, p. 4-5

14. Immigration from the Commonwealth 1965 White Paper (London, HMSO, 1965) Cmd. 2739.
15. See A. Sivandan, 'Race, Class and the State: The Black Experience in Britain' in Race and Class XVII, 4, 1976, pp.347-68; Zig Layton-Henry, The Politics of Race (London, Allen and Unwin, 1984) p.127. The New Black Presence: A Christian Scrutiny (London, British Council of Churches, 1976) p.17.
16. National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants, The First Six Months (London, HMSO, n.d. [1966]) Appendix 2, p.12.
17. Ibid. p.4
18. Ibid.
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20. Ibid.
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25. Report of the Race Relations Board for 1967-8 (London, HMSO, 1968) p.13.
26. Ibid. p.16
27. Ibid. p.21
28. E.J.B. Rose, Colour and Citizenship (Oxford, OUP,

1969)

29. The Times 28.2.1968. See also Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 - NCCI Statements (London, NCCI, n.d. [1968])
30. The Times 2.3.1968
31. The Times 9.2.1968
32. Report of the Race Relations Board 1967-8 (London, HMSO, 1968) p.12; National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants: Report for 1967 op.cit pp.16-17.
33. 1968 Race Relations Act, Section 25. 3 (a).
34. Ibid. Section 28.1.
35. Report of the Community Relations Commission for 1968-69 (London, HMSO, 1969) p.6.
36. Ibid.
37. Report of the Race Relations Board 1968-9 (London, HMSO, 1969) p.23.
38. Report of the Community Relations Commission for 1968-69 Op. cit. p.6.
39. Ibid. p.9.
40. Report of the Community Relations Commission for 1969-70 (London, HMSO, 1970) p.7.
41. Ibid. p.25
42. Report of the Race Relations Board for 1966-7 Op. Cit. p.16
43. Report of the Race Relations Board for 1970-1 (London, HMSO, 1971) p.23.
44. Ibid. p.17

45. Report of the Community Relations Commission for 1969-70 Op. cit. p.6
46. Report of the Community Relations Commission for 1970-71 (London, HMSO, 1971) p.2-3.
47. See Report of the Race Relations Board for 1970-1 Op. cit. p.24 and Report of the Community Relations Commission for 1970-1 Op. cit. See the statement by the Commission's Chairman, Appendix VI.
48. Layton-Henry, Op. cit. p.136.
49. Report of the Race Relations Board for 1970-1 Op. cit. p.21.
50. Ibid. p.20
51. Ibid. p.21
52. Ibid. p.26
53. Report of the Community Relations Commission for 1971-72 (London, HMSO, 1972) p.5.
54. Ibid.
55. Report of the Community Relations Commission for 1972-73 (London, HMSO, 1974, pp.6-7.
56. Ibid. p.10
57. Ibid. p.1
58. Ibid. p.11
59. Ibid. p.16
60. Ibid. p.23
61. Report of the Race Relations Board for 1973 (London, HMSO, 1974) p.15.

62. The Organisation of Race Relations Administration by the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration (London, House of Commons, 1975) pp.XI-XII.
63. See Report of the Race Relations Board January 1975-June 1976 (London, HMSO, 1976) p.20.
64. Ibid. p.22
65. Report of the Community Relations Commission 1975-6 (London, HMSO, 1976) p.30.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid. p.31
68. Report of the Community Relations Commission 1973-4 (London, HMSO, 1974) p.6.
69. 1976 Race Relations Act, Section 43.
70. Commission for Racial Equality: Annual Report 1978 (London, HMSO, 1978) p.2.
71. Ibid. p.34-5
72. Commission for Racial Equality: Annual Report for 1979 (London, HMSO, 1979) p.36.
73. Ibid. p.37
74. Annual Report of the Commission for Racial Equality (London, HMSO, 1981) p.2.
75. Ibid.
76. Taylor has argued that Lord Scarman's analysis contained elements of liberal, conservative and socialist thought. Nevertheless, much of Scarman's analysis can be seen to fall into the consensus

identified in this study. See Stan Taylor, 'The Scarman Report and Explanations of Riots' in John Benyon, Scarman and After (Oxford, Pergamon, 1984) pp.20-36.

77. The Scarman Report. The Brixton Disorders: 10-12 April 1981 (London, HMSO, 1981) Cmd. 8427, p.14. 2:31.
78. Ibid. p.15. 2:34.
79. Ibid. p.16. 2:38. Italics in original.
80. Ibid. p.100. 6:1.
81. Ibid. p.136. 9:5.
82. Ibid. p.109. 6:32.
83. Ibid. The House of Commons Select Committee had recently published a report about racial disadvantage which contained much the same analysis as Lord Scarman's Report. See Racial Disadvantage, the Fifth Report of the Home Affairs Committee, Session 1980-1 (London, HMSO, 1981).
84. Ibid. p.112. 6:42.
85. Ibid.
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Chapter Four: The Churches

Attempts to examine the response of the British churches to any policy are open to at least one major criticism, namely that the churches are disparate and doctrinally divided organisations which often incorporate substantial internal divisions. Generalisation about the churches' response to Commonwealth immigration and race relations initiatives may thus be misplaced. It will be argued here, however, that the churches have been in substantial agreement on policies relating to race.

The churches' consensus over policy and attitudes in the area of race politics can be seen to exhibit many features typical of the liberal political tradition's response to the subject. The argument that the political views of the churches' leadership have reflected and been part of a secular political consensus and tradition has caused much controversy.¹ It is not intended to discuss this controversy here; rather the purpose of this study is to trace values and attitudes towards the politics of race.

The immigration and race debate, naturally, has not been the major concern of the churches, nevertheless there is material available for study on the churches' thinking on these matters. This study concentrates on the reactions of the Church of England and the British Council

of Churches, assuming that these views are typical of the British churches. During the period under consideration, the Roman Catholic Church was not a full member of the British Council of Churches, but it did send observers to Council meetings. The Council's members included the Church of England and many non-conformist churches such as the Methodist and Baptist, hence this assumption is justifiable.

In common with much other established political opinion in the 1950s, Church leaders were strongly attached to the Commonwealth. They viewed it as a Christian institution, an organisation which was truly co-operative, a brotherhood of mixed races and religions. Church leaders had a special affinity with the Empire and Commonwealth since it had long been the focus of missionary endeavour. There were many sister and daughter churches of the Anglican communion in scattered places around the Empire/Commonwealth. In earlier years parts of the Empire were annexed at the behest of missionaries who wished to stamp out the slave trade in East and Central Africa.² Lecturing in 1956 to a Christian audience, Phillip Mason, later to be Director of the influential and liberal-minded Institute for Race Relations, and at the time a high church Anglican, rejected almost completely any control of Commonwealth immigration on grounds of race. He argued: 'This is a Commonwealth of many races

and to exclude British subjects on grounds of race would be the death of that ideal. It would give the lie to all we stand for...'3 Immigration control did not seem to be a likely prospect, for '...the need has not yet arisen, nor is it anywhere near'.4

The 1958 racial disturbances in Nottingham and London saw the British Council of Churches clearly stating its views about race matters. The Council released a statement which condemned the disturbances, called for integration of the immigrants and suggested that 'the churches could not consent to limitation of immigration on grounds of colour'.5

Very similar sentiments were revealed in churchmen's reactions to the bill which was to become the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act. Along with the leaders of the Labour Party and the Liberal Party, many church leaders strongly opposed the Bill. When the Bill was debated in the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, spoke strongly against it; calling it 'lamentable' and 'deplorable', he said he viewed it with 'repugnance'.6 He believed that some colour prejudice did exist in Britain and he laid responsibility for it, and the need for the Bill, on poor housing and lack of social provision. The correct way ahead, he argued, was:

'Not that we should attack her Majesty's Government, still less that we should allow the colour question to

be a matter of Party politics - that would indeed be lamentable - but that as a country we should set about attacking with far greater vigour those conditions which have created any case whatever for this proposal of restriction. I think it is the ambition of all of us that our country should be one where the restrictions imposed by this Bill could not be conceivably necessary.'⁷

Chief among these conditions, the Archbishop argued, was poor and inadequate housing, and 'Had the colour problem in housing not loomed so large, I do not believe that the demand for this Bill would have seemed nearly so insistent'.⁸ He saw the need for 'a long term attack on the background of circumstances which have created the arguments for the Bill'.⁹

Other churchmen offered much the same analysis: the Rev. Kenneth Greet, secretary of the Methodist Church's Department of Christian Citizenship, argued that the Bill was aimed at the wrong target. It did not help overcome the social problems which existed in Britain, nor did it help the social problems of the immigrants' countries of origin.¹⁰ The British Council of Churches, it is clear, did not really approve of controlling immigrant numbers. This emerges from, for example, the following minutes of the Council:

'...although the Department was in no doubt that it would like to recommend on the restriction of immigration, there were many practical matters which had to be weighed, as for example, the purely physical difficulty of housing'.¹¹

The Council's Department for Social Responsibility wrote in a report to the Council that, whilst not denying that

countries had a right to control immigration, 'We believe that migration within the Commonwealth ought to be the subject of positive planning by the whole Commonwealth, together with economic development'.¹²

Unlike the political parties, the churches usually only gave racial matters public attention when legislation was imminent, or when racial incidents had received substantial publicity. The 1964 General Election result at Smethwick, where the Conservative candidate won the seat through a sustained campaign against immigration, suggested a rejection of liberal values in British race politics. The churches' leadership accordingly attacked this threat to liberal values. In the December 1964 debate in the House of Lords on the annual renewal of parts of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, the Bishop of Liverpool spoke for the Church of England. He stressed that no social problem should be allowed to become a racial one and because of this it was probably the case that immigration still needed to be controlled. The Bishop did not mention Smethwick by name, but he did urge the need for calm:

'It is however of first rate importance to prevent any social issue from becoming a racial issue, for once passions of this kind are aroused they become uncontrollably cruel and irrational. The temperature must be kept down even if the number of immigrants has to be controlled to gain time and experience of how to do it...'¹³

The Bishop was convinced, however, that Britain needed the

immigrants: 'Our own economic necessities demand immigration'.¹⁴ He also noted with approval that 'Liverpool already seems geared into an acceptance of the fact that a multi-racial Britain may be necessary if we are to be the centre of a multi-racial Commonwealth'.¹⁵ Whilst correct policies were devised to stop social problems from becoming racial ones, the Bishop suggested:

'...it will be the duty of each responsible agency in the country dealing with social conditions to decide and state clearly what we mean by integration and by a multi-racial society; and more than that to persuade people of the virtue of the meaning we proclaim. That is the central concern of the situation as it is today.'¹⁶

Such policies, he argued, must 'be made acceptable to the very large numbers of unreflective people who must be helped to understand the situation as it really is'.¹⁷

By late 1964 and mid-1965, the churches' leadership had changed its policy from strong opposition to controls of New Commonwealth immigration and begun to favour controlled immigration, as long as it could be justified as a moral policy, designed to aid good race relations. As a Church of England publication put it in 1965: 'Control of entry is essential but the objective must be the integration of those who stay'.¹⁸ This move of the church leadership, from opposition to restrictions on immigration in the late 1950s and early 1960s, to acceptance of controls in 1964 and 1965, paralleled exactly a similar movement in the Labour and Liberal

Parties.

The source of policy briefings for Bishops' political speeches in this area was the Church of England's Board for Social Responsibility. A paper by Edwin Barker, its secretary, in March 1965 is illuminating. Barker was concerned about race relations in the Midlands, following the 1964 General Election campaign in Smethwick, and said:

'The political situation is rapidly deteriorating and needs very careful attention. Local situations can, through Local Government politics, rapidly become national political issues. Smethwick is only one example of this. The whole of the Midlands could, with a modicum of unscrupulousness, change its political allegiances through "a colour campaign". The reason is irrational fear not coloured votes.'¹⁹

Barker argued that the whole nature of the political debate about immigration required a change:

'It is absolutely essential to get the political debate on to a new basis in which "colour" and "immigrant" and "race" are not regarded as socially dirty and dangerous words. To attempt this at the present time is itself a dangerous occupation.'²⁰
[Italics in original]

He suggested that there was little need to view the immigrants in a jaundiced light, for:

'immigration presents problems of opportunity the most important of which is that of creating a vigorous multi-racial society. The creation of such a society is a laudable objective which now requires a strong re-affirmation if we are to move away from reluctant toleration of small numbers of coloured immigrants into a positive welcome.'²¹

Very similar sentiments were apparent in a letter to The Times signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and the Moderator of

the Free Church Federal Council. They argued the need for practical action to help immigrants and the necessity of removing the immigration issue from the sphere of political party controversy.²²

The Church of England supported such positive policies and so also did the British Council of Churches; the Council published a document, Immigrants in Britain which contained a very similar philosophy to the Church of England's.²³ It noted that there was now agreement amongst the major parties on the need for control of immigration and measures to improve race relations. This meant that:

'there is now enough common ground for the parties to undertake reasoned discussion. The Churches should welcome such realistic debate, provided that a deliberate effort is made to expose and eradicate the irrational and prejudiced. Any hints of appeal to prejudice, or an unapproval of discrimination based on colour, however discreetly worded, should be plainly and vigorously condemned by the Churches.'²⁴

Immigrants were benefiting Britain, the document argued, and this should always be emphasised:

'The deeply-rooted irrational fear that the immigrant is prospering at the expense of the host community must be exposed. The fact is that the immigrant has contributed substantially to the general economic welfare of Britain. Factual analysis is needed to destroy such myths.'²⁵

The document noted that many of the immigrants would settle permanently in Britain and that little clear thought had been given to the full implications of this: 'Should the objective of policy be the eventual

assimilation of all immigrant groups, or the integration of culturally distinct but not socially separate communities?'²⁶

The Church of England leadership welcomed the Bill that was to become the 1965 Race Relations Act; the Bishop of Coventry spoke for the Church in the House of Lords and greeted it warmly. He saw education as the key to problems in this area, and that good relations between the host and immigrant groups '...are, I am sure we all must realise, dependent upon a long-term, patient and widespread process of education, which removes certain misconceptions...' ²⁷ One of these misconceptions, the Bishop argued, was that the host community suffered as a result of immigrants, where in fact the immigrants 'contributed substantially to the general economic welfare of this country'.²⁸ He was clear also about the way ahead:

'The long-term way to peaceful racial integration is through education, removal of prejudice, the setting up of local conciliatory boards, the strengthening- and I underline this - of voluntary welfare agencies, such as the Citizens' Advice Bureaux...' ²⁹

The Bishop reminded the House that:

'...this country should be perfectly capable of absorbing a well-planned annual immigration of coloured people, as the result of wise education and a warm welcome, and a freedom from prejudice, of benefiting greatly by their advent...' ³⁰

The churches' commitment to Government policies in this area can be seen in the appointment of the Archbishop

of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, as Chairman of the Labour Government's race relations body, the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants. The Committee's aim was to encourage efforts towards integration and good race relations. The choice of the Archbishop of Canterbury as the Committee's chairman was perhaps a surprising one, explained possibly by the desire of the Government to depoliticise immigration and race issues. The Archbishop was viewed as an overtly non-political establishment figure with the moral weight of the churches behind him. At the same time, the Archbishop's acceptance of the chairmanship indicated his broad approval of Government policy in this area; in his foreword to the Committee's 1966 Report, for instance, the Archbishop stated that:

'The year 1966 has seen an increase in general awareness that harmonious relationships in a culturally diverse society cannot be taken for granted. They can only be achieved if there is a commitment at all levels to the principles of justice and equality irrespective of ethnic origin. Commonwealth citizens in Britain are making a full contribution to our society and we must ensure not only that their contribution is recognised but that they stand as equals in all spheres with their fellow-citizens of the host community.'³¹

Such sentiments were in the same vein as the briefing papers prepared by the Board for Social Responsibility cited earlier. The Archbishop of Canterbury's views can also be seen in some of his public statements at this time. In May 1966 the Archbishop suggested that people should realise that the British economy would be much

weaker without the contribution of Commonwealth immigrants. More education was required in order to eradicate the racial prejudice and discrimination which, reluctantly, he had to admit existed in some people.³² Later in the same year, he was reported as saying that:

'There is a case for limiting numbers [of immigrants] until society learns the art of integration, but not to enable this problem to be avoided. Perhaps the time has come to drop the word "problem" and replace it by "opportunity".³³

The Archbishop's views were also revealed in a response to an editorial in The Times. The Times had vigorously opposed the control of Commonwealth immigration in 1962, but in common with many opinion-formers, had adopted the view that controls were now necessary in order to reduce racial tension and encourage integration. An editorial admitted this in early 1967, and declared that such measures were needed not because of problems of poor housing, welfare or employment, but because of the indigenous population's hostility towards coloured immigration. The editorial called for 'vigorous restrictions on coloured immigration', together with as much effort as possible to integrate the immigrants already settled in Britain.³⁴ This editorial drew a strong rebuke from the Archbishop of Canterbury: writing to The Times, he acknowledged the need for controls, but stressed that integration was not helped by controls if those controls were based on colour as The Times argued

that they were.³⁵

In 1967 there was a debate in the Church Assembly (forerunner of the General Synod) on immigration and race. A discussion document published prior to the debate is illuminating. It stated baldly that 'If they [coloured people] are considered as a problem as distinct from an opportunity, the chances of their ever feeling at home in Britain are remote'.³⁶ The Bishop of Durham's contribution to the debate was representative of its general feeling:

'We must never think of immigrants as problems. We ought to see them as possible fellow-workers in building up a multi-racial and multi-religious community.'³⁷

The resolution carried at this debate included support for the Labour Government's intention to widen the scope of the 1965 Race Relations Act to include discrimination in the areas of housing and employment.³⁸

Church reaction to Labour's proposal to limit Kenyan Asian immigration from East Africa by the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act was predictably hostile. The Bishop of Woolwich, John Robinson, resigned from the Labour Party as a result, and applied to join the Liberal Party instead, largely because he believed the Liberals' policies on immigration were more principled.³⁹ A Staffordshire vicar tore up his British passport during a sermon and threw the pieces from the pulpit; he was quoted as saying, 'The whole thing stinks and nobody can any

longer be proud of being British'.⁴⁰ In Birmingham Cathedral, a lone bell tolled at midnight on 28 February 1968. Pulling the bell was Bishop Sinker, Provost of Birmingham, and inside the Cathedral an hour-long vigil was held in sorrow at Britain's broken promises to the Kenyan Asians.⁴¹

During the Bill's debate in the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke for the Established Church in opposition to the new immigration controls. He argued that already the Bill:

'has brought a good deal of dismay to many of those who are working in this country for good community relations and a good deal of distrust not only among the immigrant communities...but also among those who are trying so hard to get on with this devoted work'.⁴²

The Bill, he said, 'virtually distinguishes United Kingdom citizens on the score of race'.⁴³ Lord Soper, the well known Methodist peer, also condemned the Bill; in his view, policy must be aimed towards achieving 'a decent multi-racial society in these islands'.⁴⁴ Instead, the Bill was 'a racial measure', and as such, wrong.⁴⁵ He rejected arguments that the British economy would suffer unless immigration was limited further: '...we have no sufficient evidence that the problem which we face is pre-eminently an economic problem. I believe that it is pre-eminently a social problem'.⁴⁶ All the Bishops and non-conformist representatives voted against the Government on the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Bill.⁴⁷

If the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Bill was greeted with distaste by many of the churches' leadership, even greater distaste was evident in their reaction to Enoch Powell's "rivers of blood" speech, which called for an end to immigration and the introduction of repatriation of immigrants. Church leaders' dislike of Powell's views was sharpened by the fact that Powell was a practising Anglican. Powell not only rejected the church leadership's views on immigration and racial matters, he also rejected their assumption that their views represented "Christian" politics. Canon John Collins, Precentor of St Paul's Cathedral, roundly condemned Enoch Powell for his views on race which had, he argued, an evil influence on society, and also separated Christianity and politics.⁴⁸ A televised debate occurred in October 1969, between Powell and perhaps his most vociferous critic in the church, Trevor Huddleston, Bishop of Stepney.⁴⁹ Powell argued that there was nothing particularly unchristian about his own views and that it was his duty to represent his constituents' opinions and point to dangers which he foresaw in society.⁵⁰ Huddlestons's reply criticised Powell on various counts:

'I quite understand from your [Powell's] point of view that you have got to take account of people's views and opinions. I believe you are mistaken. I believe that Britain today, as a matter of fact, has got far more tolerant people in it on this issue of race than you give reason to suppose, from your speeches, and I believe it to be the duty of a responsible politician to build on this tolerance and not to increase the

intolerance, which is certainly there.'⁵¹

The British Council of Churches, at its 1969 meeting in Plymouth, issued a detailed statement of its views on immigration and race relations.⁵² Recent public debate (i.e. Powell's speeches) was said to have 'considerably retarded' good race relations.⁵³ The statement attacked the Conservative Party and Powell's views in this area:

'Speeches and statements such as these underline yet again the urgent necessity for developing a positive immigration policy in place of the piecemeal and often panic legislation that has been resorted to in the past to deal with so-called "crises" which need never have arisen had there been adequate forward planning.

The development of such a policy should be a matter of concern to every citizen in Britain, especially since public discussion of these issues is likely to increase as the next general election approaches. There is a particular need to challenge the assumption that the presence of immigrants is in itself a "problem" and that the size of the problem is related to the size of the immigrant community.

There are of course social problems. The presence of immigrants has highlighted such problems as housing, education and the shortage of hospital and transport staff. But these are not accurately described as immigrant problems.'⁵⁴

In contrast to the hostile reception given to Powell's views and the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act, the church leadership warmly welcomed the 1968 Race Relations Act. In the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury saw the Bill as one aspect of the fight to create good community relations, and he gave his support to Labour Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins' ideal of good race relations:

'I see this Bill as a necessary item in the immense efforts that we need to be making to get good

community relations, which have been described as "equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of tolerance". If that is to be, it calls for a delicate balance between the readiness of newcomers in any community to adapt themselves to that community and the readiness of those already in the community to accept differences of outlook and to be very sympathetic and tolerant.'⁵⁵

He commended the work of the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants (NCCI), of which he was Chairman. The NCCI had heavily emphasised the need for education of the public, for which the Archbishop praised them, and added,

'Of course, the work of education includes helping the immigrant communities to understand things about this country which they badly need to know and understand, and also helping our community generally to know what is the contribution that some immigrant communities have been giving to our economy and culture.'⁵⁶

He concluded: 'I believe that the help which this Bill gives to the building up of good community relations in this country will be a contribution which our country can make to racial harmony in the world at large'.⁵⁷

Just as they opposed the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act, so the churches strongly opposed the Bill which was to become the 1971 Commonwealth Immigration Act. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke against the Bill in the House of Lords, and rejected the Government's claim that they had a popular mandate for it.⁵⁸ He said that he would vote against the Bill because it was unnecessary and damaging, and would harm community relations; he added: 'And in recent years we have been discovering more and

more that good community relations do not entirely look after themselves'.⁵⁹

The Archbishop cited with approval the views of the Chairman of the Community Relations Commission, namely that the Bill would increase fears and insecurity in the community. Ramsey added:

'What are the fears, my Lords, which create bad relations? There is, on the one side, the fear of our own resident white population, that the influx of a large increase of Commonwealth immigrants will bring with it a proliferation of social problems...There is, on the other side, the fear of minorities of finding themselves regarded as second class citizens; the fear of being regarded as a kind of "problem citizen".'⁶⁰

The Bishop of Coventry also joined the debate, opposing the Bill with the argument that it was both unnecessary and harmful to community relations. He concluded by saying:

'In closing, I cannot help feeling that there are in this country far too many people who still regard immigrants as an unhappy necessity; who treat them as second-class citizens, and who - I must put it bluntly - would not be at all unhappy if all of them were to be asked to go home within the course of the next few years...This seems to me a total misunderstanding of what in past centuries has been one of the glories of this country - the ability to absorb other races and the people of other nations, using the particular contribution which they have brought with them to enrich our own, so that together we have formed a finer community than was in existence before they came. We must endeavour to take from people the purely negative attitude to immigration and supplant it with a positive concept of a multi-cultural, multi-racial family, vibrant with life and rich with many-sided culture.'⁶¹

Opposition to the 1971 Bill was also the British Council of Churches' stance; it also argued that the Bill was

unnecessary and would increase racial tension.⁶² In 1973 a joint delegation from the British Council of Churches and the Church of England met David Lane, Home Office Minister for Immigration Matters. The delegation told him that the Act was 'immoral and liable to produce a permanently damaging effect on relations with the immigrant communities'.⁶³

In contrast to their reaction to the Conservatives' 1971 immigration control act, the churches gave their blessing to Labour's 1976 Race Relations Act. The Act came at a time of rising success and publicity for the National Front, and the church leaders saw this legislation as a valuable aid to fighting such activity. The churches warmly welcomed the 1976 Race Relations Act. The Bishop of Worcester, Robert Woods, spoke for the Established Church at the Second Reading of the Bill in the Lords. He welcomed the agreement between the major parties about the aim of policy in this area, but lamented the lack of Government effort put into welcoming immigrants to Britain:

'...though we have a unity of approach, yet Government Ministries such as Housing, Employment and Education, have not produced programmes and resources to enable this new minority to find an equal and tolerable position in our society.'⁶⁴

The role of the churches, he said, was clear:

'I find myself with my colleagues in the churches as we come to this new Bill, asking certain basic questions of it. Will the minority ethnic groups share equality of opportunity the better? Will the

new legislation enable the minorities to feel that they belong to the British community? Will the new instrument that is proposed aid in the development of a harmonious society? Basic questions such as these I believe that we in the churches have to ask... '65

The Bishop hoped that the Bill would aid cultural values, for:

'The cultural structures of many of the minority community among us are matters for which we can be thankful. In a sense, the Festival of Islam has shown something of what can now become a cultural asset in this country; it is just one of the varieties of culture that can now bring more colour and interest to the otherwise rather drab and monotonous existence that is already the lot of so many.' '66

Similar sentiments were made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Donald Coggan, in his 1976 Christmas Day sermon, when he stressed how much black Britons brought to Britain:

'...that man with a skin of a different colour from mine could be an enrichment to my life and that of my neighbours, if I would not look upon him as a potential foe...to look upon such people as sources of enrichment would lower the temperature of racial suspicion...' '67

Another important event for the churches in 1976 was the publication by the British Council of Churches of a controversial report, The New Black Presence in Britain. The report was introduced in a foreword by David Sheppard, Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, who wanted the benefits and potential of immigrants to be emphasised, rather than the problems: 'I go along with the view that black people have not brought problems to Britain, but have revealed the problems our society already had'.⁶⁸ Sheppard argued that

the churches should support positive discrimination policies, for they reflected God's character:

'We should argue consistently for the principle of positive discrimination and practise it whenever it is within our power to do so...When we argue for positive discrimination in favour of groups in the greatest need, other groups will grumble that it's not fair. They want even-handed justice to be fair. This becomes very plain in times of economic cut-back; cuts "across the board" appear to be fair. But such cuts deny any concept of priority of needs. If we are to reflect the character of the living...God, we should argue unashamedly for policies which will spend much more money, give much more resources to those inner-city areas where black people largely live.'⁶⁹

The report of the British Council of Churches contained similar views; in summarising problems the authors observed in the black communities, it noted that there was a:

'...co-opting of potential leaders [of the black communities] into organisations that are intended to control discontent and do ambulance welfare work, so that they are not available to engage more radically with the structures of society which are based on exploitation and which create the casualties in the first place'.⁷⁰

The Report lamented the poor welcome that the British churches had given immigrants: 'Because British churches could not welcome these new members and adjust to allow their full participation, they themselves are now the losers'.⁷¹ The Report was convinced that New Commonwealth immigrants would be a benefit to Britain:

'The black presence can offer a new awareness, out of its own rich understanding of man in society; it can bring insights and values that have long been eroded in the West... This country has an opportunity for its national character to grow and be renewed on a scale such as it has not known for many centuries.

This opportunity impels us to repeat one of our basic opening questions: "What sort of Britain do we want?" Is it to stay as it is, or go backwards, as a society which pushes people on to the margins and condemns them to remain at the bottom of a heap? Or can Britain take the opportunity to accept a further phase of change?'72

The New Black Presence was generally welcomed by church leaders, although it was too extreme for some. The Church of England's Board for Social Responsibility was divided in its reaction to the British Council of Churches' Report, and published a report of its own: Britain as a Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Society; it was published just prior to a General Synod debate on the Council of Churches' Report.⁷³ A spokesman for the Board said that the major purpose of the debate on Synod was to identify the Church of England publicly with the ideal of a multi-racial and multi-cultural society, and to press the Government to adopt positive discrimination towards coloured immigrants and their dependants. The Synod agreed a motion commending these aims.⁷⁴

Very similar views were apparent in a statement made by the British Council of Churches against racism and the National Front, issued in 1977. One of its points was:

'We recognise that Britain is now a pluralist society of varied races, cultures and religions; we must respect those who practise different religions and adhere to different styles of life; a varied society offers new opportunities to us all.'⁷⁵

The churches were united in their opposition to the Conservative Government's 1981 British Nationality Act.

This opposition was first seen in a document from the Roman Catholic Bishops in England and Wales, whose proposals were later approved by the Church of England's Board for Social Responsibility and the British Council of Churches. The document stressed that Britain was now 'irreversibly a multi-racial and multi-cultural society'.⁷⁶ The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking in the House of Lords and, he suggested, for many British church leaders, strongly opposed the Bill. He argued that 'the Bill does not seem to spell out the securities of citizenship within the multi-racial society that this society has now become'.⁷⁷ He made clear what he believed the Act should do:

'I recognise there are evil forces, from left and right, ready to play on people's fears and to stir up divisions, but we must not present them with any material to do so. What is needed, above all, from a new British Nationality Act is reassurance; reassurance that could only be provided by a measure the basis of which is seen to be equality of respect and regard.'⁷⁸

Lord Scarman's report on the Brixton riots received enthusiastic backing from the churches; in the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury supported early implementation of Scarman's proposals.⁷⁹ The Archbishop questioned whether the blame for the riots could be explained by poor social conditions alone, and expressed his own feelings on the nature of society:

'Unemployment and bad housing certainly play a major part in fuelling discontent which erupts into riot...[but] all societies are flawed by fundamental

failures, selfishness, aggression and the lust for power over others.'80

He also supported Lord Scarman's recommendations of special help for black Britons:

'Whatever may be the pros and cons of reverse discrimination, it is surely right that special effort should be made to give deprived sections of our community, whether black or white, the education and training opportunities which will enable them to compete on an equal level with young people in more prosperous areas.'81

The Archbishop also noted the stress on "community" in discussion of Lord Scarman's report and he emphasised the role the churches had to play in building such a community:

'In the debate over this report the concept of "community" is constantly invoked. What precisely is this "community" which we are seeking to involve and represent? One of the difficulties of work in the inner cities is precisely that the sense of community has disintegrated...

Now communities are not built of sympathetic legislation. The Scarman recommendations will act as scaffolding. We have to look for ways of replacing the bricks and mortar of a community; the floors and walls we have allowed to crumble. A real community is not even built on better housing or more jobs; it is built on the way in which people treat each other.

I regard the churches in Brixton and in other inner city areas as vital agents in this fundamental community building.'82

Conclusion

Close examination of the values of church leaders evident in their response to events in British race politics reveals that these values are central to the secular

liberal response associated with the Labour and Liberal Parties and race relations bodies.⁸³ The record of the churches in this area of policy is therefore of considerable importance to a study of liberal values on immigration and race relations.

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policies are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three above.

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Chapter Five: The Indigenous Population

The values of the liberal tradition have led its supporters to welcome New Commonwealth immigration, to accept immigration control with great reluctance, and to give warm support to initiatives to foster good race relations and assist black Britons. The reactions of the majority of the white British population towards New Commonwealth immigration have taken a quite different form. The majority of white Britons have viewed immigration as an unwelcome phenomenon from its conception, and have been unenthusiastically ambivalent towards measures forbidding racial discrimination and promoting race relations.

The policies adopted on immigration and race relations during the period 1961-81 have therefore often seen a division between the majority of the white British population and many politicians and leaders of opinion. The variance between the opinions of ordinary citizens and political leaders has been widely commented upon.¹ Such a division of values has several implications for liberal policy and attitudes, and it is therefore important to review the evidence for such a divergence of opinion.

Assessing the reactions of the population of a country towards certain events or an area of politics is rarely straightforward or simple. Unlike political leaders and opinion formers, the typical citizen does not make speeches or write pamphlets or books in order to broadcast his views. To assess the opinions of the general public,

recourse must be made to public opinion polls and to recognised political phenomena which bear closely on the matters involved. Public opinion polls provide very useful information as to the public's views of political issues; poll results, however, are for a number of reasons unlikely to be entirely accurate. Factors such as the wording of questions, the representativeness of those polled within a region or between regions, the complexity of an issue and its recent political saliency are likely to affect the results obtained.

Gallup, for example, in May 1977 asked the following question: 'The law on incitement to racial hatred used to require proof of intent to stir up racial hatred. Now it is an offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting language in circumstances where hatred against a racial group is likely to be stirred up. Do you think this is fair or unfair?'² It would seem very unlikely that most people would have sufficient knowledge of the law, (the 1936 Public Order Act and the 1965 and 1976 Race Relations Acts), principles of intent and public order to give a reasoned answer to such a question.

Another complex issue is the degree to which opinions are, or can be, "manufactured". For example, a poll reviewed later in this chapter was conducted after a speech by Mrs Thatcher in which she appeared to support the need for repatriation; 59% of respondents favoured such a policy. However, this figure is capable of varying interpretation: it could be argued that Mrs Thatcher's

speech shaped public opinion and created this response. This type of argument is attractive to liberals, since they typically attach much importance to a view of people as having their ideas and behaviour shaped by their environment. Conversely, it could be argued that the figure underestimated true support for repatriation policies. Since 1968 when Enoch Powell brought the idea of repatriation to public prominence, there has been an all-party consensus amongst established political opinion that repatriation as a policy is both immoral and impractical. Poll respondents may have reacted to this by believing that there was slight chance of repatriation policies being enacted, and therefore that there was little point in supporting them. Furthermore, some authorities suggest that opinion poll data underestimates genuine opinion on such "unrespectable" issues.³

For these and other reasons, poll results should be viewed with some caution.⁴ Nevertheless, intelligently conducted opinion polls can be a very accurate indication of public opinion; this is perhaps especially the case if the evidence from a number of polls over several years points in the same direction. Above all, polls provide information which it would be very difficult, perhaps impossible, to obtain in any other way. The reactions of white Britons to the issues raised in the race policy area can be assessed with varying degrees of confidence. Where the issue is relatively simple and easily understood, such as opinion on New Commonwealth immigration to Britain, poll

results are consistent over time and reveal clear and unambiguous opinions amongst those polled. When poll questions ask about how black Britons should be treated in various circumstances, results are less clear and appear to be affected by the form of questions, and key words employed in them.

This chapter examines some of the evidence of the opinions of white Britons towards race issues. Topics such as immigration control, repatriation and racial discrimination are considered. A deliberate omission is any consideration of support for the National Front, a party which has made its opposition to immigration and race relations measures most explicit. The National Front has had some support, particularly in areas of high concentration of black Britons, but it has never attracted major public support. For this reason it is not included in this study.⁵

Immigration to Britain by members of the New Commonwealth began to gather momentum during the late 1940s and the 1950s. As numbers of immigrants increased, so it seems that white Britons' reluctance to allow immigration also increased.

The table below reproduces some poll results from the 1950s. The 1951 poll asked, 'Provided there is plenty of work about, do you think that more people should be encouraged to come and work here?' The 1956 poll asked a similar question, but the 1958 and 1961 polls asked whether immigration should be controlled or not. 6

The results were as follows:

	1951	1956	1958	1961 (May)
'Yes'	38	37	21	21
'Yes, provided there is work' etc.	8	35		
'No' /Immigration to be controlled	38	18	65	73
Other answers	10	9		
'Don't know'	6	1	14	6

The results of the poll suggest that opposition to immigration increased through the 1950s. Opposition appears to have hardened in 1958; it may be that the racial disturbances in Nottingham and London in that year acted as a catalyst for this opposition. The Daily Express published a poll at the time of the 1958 disturbances and the results indicated strong support for controlling immigration, with 79.1% of a national sample favouring immigration control and 81.5% of a London sample favouring control.⁷ Another survey in 1960 found that over 80% of both Labour and Conservative supporters favoured restriction of New Commonwealth immigration.⁸

Donley Studlar has summarised the findings of various opinion polls on immigration control from the late 1950s to the early 1970s.⁹ He suggests that two factors in particular are striking about the findings: firstly, the strength of the opinions expressed, and secondly, the consistency of the opinions expressed over the period concerned. There was some variation in the form of

questions used, but the basic form was, 'Do you approve or disapprove of Government controlling immigration?' Figures favouring the control of immigration ranged from a high of 87% in August 1965, to a low of 57% in September 1972, the mean figure being 69.5%.

Very similar findings were reported by Butler and Stokes in their survey.¹⁰ The authors found that half their respondents felt "very strongly" about Commonwealth immigration, while a third felt "fairly strongly". Respondents were asked, 'Do you think that too many immigrants have been let into this country or not?' The question was asked five times in the period from the summer of 1963 until the summer of 1970, and the percentage of respondents answering "too many" varied from a low of 81% in the spring of 1966, to a high of 87% in the summer of 1969. Butler and Stokes concluded that during the period of their survey, '...strong and overwhelmingly hostile attitudes towards immigrants were quite general in the country'.¹¹

Ivor Crewe, drawing upon the material obtained by Butler and Stokes together with other later material, presented the following table:¹²

Q. 'Do you think too many immigrants have been let into this country or not?

If 'yes': 'How strongly do you feel about this? Very strongly, fairly strongly or not very strongly?'

The results of these questions are below:

	column percentages					
	1963	1964	1966	1970	1974	1979
Feels <u>very</u> strongly that there are too many immigrants		45	46	46	43	40
Feels <u>fairly</u> strongly that there are too many immigrants	87	29	28	28	29	35
Too many immigrants but doesn't feel very strongly		12	11	11	15	11
Not too many immigrants	13	14	15	15	14	14

Similar findings are available for the period in the late 1970s. An extensive NOP survey in February 1978 of the indigenous population's views found 86% of respondents believing that too many immigrants had been allowed to enter Britain.¹³ Majorities of over 75% were against the admission of parents, children over 18 years, fiance(e)s and brothers and sisters of black Britons already settled in Britain.¹⁴ In 1978 Mrs Thatcher made a well-publicised speech about race issues, a speech which became known as her "swamping speech". The speech appeared to herald a new, tough Conservative Party policy on immigration in

which Mrs Thatcher hinted at repatriation.¹⁵ In the month after the speech, the level of Conservative Party support as measured by opinion polls moved from being 2% behind the Labour Party to being, for a short time, 11% ahead.¹⁶

A remarkable feature of this evidence of public opinion is its apparent consistency. A question asked repeatedly from May 1959 to September 1972 concerned respondents' feelings towards coloured immigrants; it asked, 'What about your own feelings? Are they more favourable, less favourable or the same?' A majority of respondents answered that their feelings remained the same, ranging from a high of 64% in December 1964 to a low of 54% in May 1959, with a mean figure of 59%.¹⁷

Donley Studlar suggests that the first national opinion poll to include a question about repatriation was conducted in March 1968, just prior to Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech.¹⁸ At this time, 59% of respondents supported measures to encourage repatriation; the mean figure of those supporting repatriation in the period March 1968 to September 1972 was 56.6%.¹⁹ The 1978 NOP survey conducted shortly after Mrs Thatcher's "swamping" speech also tackled the question of repatriation, and asked respondents, 'Do you think coloured immigrants who are already here should be encouraged to go home or not?' 59% of a national sample of respondents answered "yes" to this question, 20 whilst 58% of respondents supported government-financed assistance to repatriate immigrants.²¹

No review of the indigenous population's opinions on

immigration and race would be complete without discussion of support for Enoch Powell. In April 1968 Powell, a member of the Conservative Shadow Cabinet, made his "rivers of blood" speech in which he called for an almost complete halt to New Commonwealth immigration together with measures to repatriate black Britons.²² The period '1966 to 1968 has been characterised as the "liberal hour", a time when liberal policies in the area of race politics were widely accepted amongst members of the British political leadership.²³ There was an all-party consensus to the effect that the race issue had been successfully dealt with by the immigration control measures of 1962 and 1965 and the 1965 Race Relations Act. In his speech, Enoch Powell broke this consensus and spoke out, he said, for the ordinary man in the street.²⁴

The reaction to Powell's speech was astounding: from having been a relatively obscure Conservative politician, Powell shot to public prominence. A Gallup poll in March 1968, prior to Powell's speech, found that only 1% of respondents saw Powell as the best man to lead the Conservative Party. After the speech, in April 1968, the number supporting Powell as the best person to lead the Conservative Party had risen to 24%.²⁵ Powell received over one hundred thousand letters of support after his "rivers of blood" speech, and about eight hundred of opposition.²⁶ The leader of the Conservative Party, Edward Heath, also received many letters: around 7,000, most of them in favour of Enoch Powell's views and against

Heath's having dismissed Powell from the Shadow Cabinet.²⁷

Edward Heath's constituency agent was reported as saying that after Powell's speech and his dismissal, 'For several days the telephone rang in this office all day with people from all over the country shouting obscenities'.²⁸ MPs were treated to a mass demonstration outside the Houses of Parliament by London dockers and market porters, in vociferous support of Powell's views on immigration, and there were token strikes throughout the country in his support.²⁹

Public reaction to Powell's speech, as measured by opinion polls, was very firmly in support of his views. Interviewees were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with what Powell had said about immigrants. Gallup found 74% in agreement, ORC found 82%, NOP recorded 67% and the Daily Express found 79%.³⁰ Similar, but slightly lower, figures were recorded in support of the opinion that Edward Heath was wrong to dismiss Enoch Powell from the Shadow Cabinet.³¹ Powell was MP for Wolverhampton South West at the time, and local reaction also appears to have been strongly in his favour. The local evening paper, the Wolverhampton Express and Star, received 5,000 letters in support of Powell, and 300 against. A further postcard poll organised by the paper produced 35,000 cards in support of Powell and only a small number against.³²

A particular feature of support for Enoch Powell was that it was based on a single issue, that of immigration, race relations and repatriation, and apparently oblivious to

Powell's opinions on any other political or economic issue.³³ There is a considerable amount of evidence regarding the sort of people who supported Powell's views on immigration. Spearman's largely impressionistic assessments from a survey of the letters in support of Powell have been confirmed by more detailed study.³⁴ As Schoen notes: 'Powellites are distinctive for their lack of distinctiveness, they form a ...national constituency'.³⁵ Studlar, reviewing the poll data on the indigenous population's response to immigration argues similarly that there was no strong link between opinion on immigration and social circumstances, and that similar views were widespread among white Britons.³⁶ According to Spearman at least, Powellites were concerned not so much about the racial characteristics of the newcomers but about changes in British culture. Spearman quotes one letter-writer as expressing typical views:

'No Briton wants to see his traditional way of living, the country he has loved and fought for, lose its identity and particular character through the over great acceptance of too many peoples of quite different cultures and ways of life.'³⁷

Powell was very active during the 1970 General Election campaign, where his views on racial issues attracted much publicity. He argued for voluntary repatriation, an end to all coloured immigration, and a new nationality law to identify British citizens. The Conservative Party's victory in 1970, which was somewhat unexpected, may have owed something to Powell's popularity. He was a leading

Conservative, chiefly associated with popular policies on race and immigration, and may well have led the Conservative Party to be publicly identified as the toughest party on the politics of race. For several years, owing to the bipartisan consensus on racial matters, many voters had found it hard to distinguish between the major parties' position on immigration control.³⁸ Powell's breach of this bipartisan consensus and widespread publicity may well have associated the Conservative Party with his views, in spite of Edward Heath's evident lack of support for Powell. The influence of Powell on the 1970 General Election result has been a matter of some dispute; some have argued that Powell's activity had little effect.³⁹ However, an academic consensus appears to have been formed to support the view that Powell's view on immigration, undoubtedly popular, made a substantial contribution to the Conservative victory in 1970.⁴⁰

Evidence of the indigenous population's reactions to immigration from the New Commonwealth is reasonably straightforward; harder to assess are reactions to black Britons settled in Britain. Different polls have produced differing and sometimes conflicting results. There is also a dilemma in that some research finds tolerant and sympathetic attitudes amongst white Britons to their black counterparts, whilst other research yields evidence of extensive racial discrimination against black Britons. It seems likely that there is a distinction between people's attitudes, or professed attitudes, and their behaviour in

this area.⁴¹ Just as a smoker may believe that smoking is harmful to health, but continue to smoke, it seems that interviewees have been content to agree to principles of equal treatment for black Britons, and yet practise discrimination.

Furthermore, those of a liberal background have sometimes emphasised tolerant attitudes which they have found to argue that whilst white Britons opposed coloured immigration, they were nevertheless sympathetic to black Britons settled in this country. There has been a reluctance to accept the argument that many white Britons are resentful of the presence of black Britons in Britain. As Professor Rose has remarked, 'English politicians have long prided themselves on their tolerance, and do not wish to admit that discrimination can occur in England'.⁴² A good example of this phenomenon concerns the Community Relations Commission's 1974 and 1975 survey of opinions on racial matters. The survey was published shortly before the debates on what became the 1976 Race Relations Act, and the Commission wrote of their findings:

'...we hoped to be able to show that the extremists do not speak for the silent majority, and that the bulk of the population would be more than willing to support positive Government action than some politicians might suppose.'⁴³

It seems evident that opinion polls on attitudes to immigrants living in Britain met with greater technical problems than polls on immigration itself; other political issues often entered the arena. For example, a question

such as 'Do you favour measures to improve racial harmony?' may produce many positive replies based on simple prudence; most people wish to live in a peaceful society. Obviously the phrasing of questions is a matter of great significance. In Chapter Seven below it is suggested that some of the evidence and apparent discrepancies in this area can be explained in terms of the "free rider" problem.

One of the best known surveys is contained in the major work Colour and Citizenship, published in 1969.⁴⁴ A survey in this study had as one of its aims the measurement of colour prejudice in the indigenous population; its findings were that only 10% of white Britons were "prejudiced", 17% were "prejudice inclined", 38% were "tolerant inclined" and 35% were "tolerant".⁴⁵ As a later chapter in the study noted:

'the extent of tolerance in Britain cannot be stressed too often...what is needed in short is not an effort to make people unprejudiced, but rather to remind them that they are unprejudiced.'⁴⁶ [Italics in original].

Despite the study's publication soon after the phenomenon of Powellism had arisen, it argued that the majority of the indigenous population were tolerant and favoured good race relations. Dilip Hiro notes that a survey by Political and Economic Planning at the same time found widespread discrimination against black Britons by the indigenous population. Hiro suggests:

'Put together the two surveys were saying this: there is massive discrimination against coloured people by whites, 73 per cent of whom are "tolerant" or "tolerant inclined".'⁴⁷

The conclusions of the Colour and Citizenship survey have been seriously and convincingly challenged, largely on grounds of the methodology used. The sociologist Daniel Lawrence has described the survey's conclusions as 'completely discredited'.⁴⁸ Accurate measurement of abstract qualities of "prejudice" and "tolerance" is fraught with methodological difficulties. Lawrence suggests that the categories used in the Colour and Citizenship survey were completely arbitrary; his re-examination of some of the original data upon which the survey was based has found very different results. For example, Lawrence found that 61.1% of respondents felt that Indians and Pakistanis took more out of Britain than they contributed, whilst 65.1% thought this about West Indians; only 38% of respondents felt this about Greek immigrants.⁴⁹ Respondents were also asked whether they thought colour would ever become unimportant to the way people viewed each other; 62% of those interviewed thought that colour would always be important, and as few as 8% believed that colour would become unimportant at some time in the future.⁵⁰ In view of these methodological problems, it is apparent that evidence on public opinion produced in this survey in Colour and Citizenship must be dismissed as being unreliable.

Two surveys which indicate the difficulties involved in this area were published in 1976 and 1977. Alan Marsh published data which found, he argued, that the indigenous population was very hostile to black Britons.⁵¹ The

Community Relations Commission responded with a survey of its own, with much more optimistic findings that many people were not particularly concerned about race relations and immigration.⁵²

A survey conducted by NOP for the Community Relations Commission was carried out in 1974 and 1975, and published the following year, immediately prior to the introduction of the 1976 Race Relations Act, under the title, 'Some of My Best Friends...'⁵³ The survey attempted to assess people's opinions on racial matters, and the results justified the conclusion of the Commission for Racial Equality, that measures to improve race relations were largely supported.⁵⁴ The survey concluded that white respondents distinguished clearly between the issues of immigration and race relations measures, immigration producing a hostile response from many, whilst race relations measures were given approval.⁵⁵ However, the survey did not include a specific question about respondents' views on immigration, other than asking interviewees how many coloured immigrants they believed had entered Britain the previous year.⁵⁶ It is apparent that the survey employed techniques which were likely to produce positive reactions to race relations measures. For example, Table 23A of the survey lists respondents' spontaneous, unprompted suggestions of ways to improve race relations.⁵⁷ Arguments which the evidence cited earlier in this chapter suggests was important to many people, produced very low figures; for example, 7% of respondents

spontaneously suggested immigration control, and 4% suggested "sending immigrants back" as methods to improve race relations. Table 23B shows the numbers who reacted to prompted ideas to improve race relations; the suggestion of 'centres to help immigrants with language problems' received 88% support, whilst the suggestion that 'the law should be strengthened to prevent discrimination on the basis of colour' received support of only 52%.⁵⁸ However, neither of the spontaneously-suggested "stop immigration/send immigrants back" categories was included in the suggested methods of improving race relations. Differences between these figures suggest variances produced by prompted and unprompted questions, and seriously undermine the accuracy of the results of this survey.⁵⁹ A survey immediately after the 1979 General Election, for example, directly asked respondents if stopping immigration was the best way to improve race relations, and found 51% in agreement.⁶⁰ An NOP survey of 1978 asked respondents 'What would you say is the most important problem facing Britain today?' and found that 50% of respondents named immigration and race relations.⁶¹ However, this poll was taken after Mrs Thatcher's "swamping" speech cited above, when she hinted at much tougher legislation on immigration. These issues were obviously politically salient at the time.

It seems best to conclude that an assessment of the indigenous population's reactions to black Britons is difficult to establish, and that much of the evidence

available is conflicting. It is clear, however, that there was a lack of consensus in the attitudes of white Britons to their black counterparts. Gallup asked respondents in 1968, 'Do you think that on the whole this country has benefited or been harmed through immigrants coming to settle here from the Commonwealth?' Some 16% of respondents believed that Britain had benefited, and 61% felt that it had been harmed by immigration. Four years later, in 1972, the responses were 20% and 47% respectively.⁶² A NOP survey in 1976 found that white Britons, when asked what effects black Britons had upon Britain, replied as follows: 45% saw them as harmful, 23% saw them as making no difference, and 20% believed that they were beneficial.⁶³

A number of studies have found evidence of extensive racial discrimination in Britain. Three surveys particularly of note have been carried out by Political and Economic Planning (PEP), and the body which succeeded it, the Policy Studies Institute (PSI). The first PEP survey centred on six English towns and sought to establish how much racial discrimination existed against New Commonwealth immigrants. Its findings were that extensive discrimination was in existence.⁶⁴ The second survey in 1974 found that racial discrimination was not simply the result of intentional acts of discrimination, but often an unintentional result of certain practices in Britain against black immigrants. Such indirect discrimination sometimes derived, it was argued, from social practices

which predated New Commonwealth immigration.⁶⁵ This report was influential in the drawing up of the Labour Government's Race Relations Act of 1976, which forbade indirect racial discrimination.

The third survey conducted in 1982 by PEP, found that people of Asian and West Indian origin occupied a disproportionately low place in British society. The survey saw this as a result, amongst other things, of varying educational backgrounds amongst black workers, the difficulties of Asian workers with the English language, the concentration of coloured immigrants in certain areas, and direct and indirect racial discrimination.⁶⁶ The survey concluded that inequalities in this area were based on three problems:

'First, it is clear that racialism and direct racial discrimination continue to have a powerful impact on the lives of black people. Second, the position of the black citizens of Britain largely remain, geographically and economically, that allocated to them as immigrant workers in the 1950s and 1960s. Third, it is still the case that the organisations and institutions of British society have policies and practices that additionally disadvantage black people because they frequently take no account of the cultural differences between groups with different ethnic origins.'⁶⁷

When white Britons are asked questions about laws forbidding racial discrimination, their answers tend to vary considerably with the phrasing the questions employ, and possibly, their interpretation of the answers expected. General questions about the value of law in this area often gain more support than specific questions asking whether

racial discrimination should be forbidden in certain areas.⁶⁸ For example, a 1967 ORC survey found 58% of the sample in favour of equal treatment for black Britons in housing and employment; when, however, the questions became more specific, only 44% thought that it should be made illegal to sell or rent a house on racial grounds, whilst 48% believed it should be illegal to refuse employment on the same grounds.⁶⁹

Some ORC polls have been revealing of the inconsistency of attitude by many respondents regarding racial matters. Several polls asked respondents whether 'coloured people settled in this country should be treated differently from white people or the same, when applying to join a club'. A poll in October 1974 found that 81% favoured equal treatment; in April 1976 this figure was 82%, and in October 1976, 84%, representing a large, and rising, majority. However, ORC also asked, 'Do you think the law should be changed to make it illegal for [private clubs] to refuse membership to people because of their colour?' In both 1974 and 1976, only 50% of respondents believed that the law should be changed.⁷¹ Respondents were apparently unaware of any contradiction in their views. Questions appear to produce quite different results depending largely on the degree of specification mentioned, the more generalised the question, the more racially tolerant the answers.

Since the formation in 1962 of the first race relations body sponsored by central government, the Commonwealth

Immigrants Advisory Committee, successive governments have put considerable effort into promoting race relations. Three Race Relations Acts, successive race relations bodies, together with substantial spending on the Urban Programme and similar initiatives, testify to this. There has been a persistent strand of thinking that race relations cannot look after themselves but require positive attention in finance, legislation and effort (see Chapter Ten below). The leaders of the Labour and Liberal Parties and the churches moved, within a period of a few years, from opposition to measures controlling immigration, to support for such measures and increasingly tight restrictions on eligibility. This move, between 1961 and 1965, has been widely interpreted as a response to the strong feelings of the electorate over the issue; certainly, by 1965, policy was united in the belief that good race relations were dependent on the strength of immigration controls.

Such race relations activity can be interpreted variously, but it is apparent that liberal opinion acknowledged that the majority of the indigenous population viewed immigrants from the New Commonwealth with resentment.

Conclusion

Evidence of the reactions of the indigenous population to New Commonwealth immigration and the advent of black Britons has been reviewed in this chapter. For a number of

reasons this evidence is difficult to assess, but it is clear that a large majority consistently viewed immigration with hostility. Attitudes to black Britons and their treatment in Britain are more blurred, and sometimes ambivalent. Whilst there was substantial commitment to the principle of equal treatment for black Britons, this commitment weakened when specific issues were examined. The existence of Government-sponsored race relations initiatives supports these contentions, race relations measures clearly having been unnecessary if the indigenous population had welcomed immigrants wholeheartedly.

Given the continuing and apparently deeply-felt hostility to New Commonwealth immigration by white Britons, it was unlikely that such attitudes would change once immigrants became black Britons. The attitude of the indigenous population has been described as 'antagonistic acceptance'⁷², whilst Professor Rose suggests that the newcomers are viewed as being 'British Blacks' rather than 'Black Britons'.⁷³

Three conclusions are drawn from this evidence: firstly, that the majority of the white British population during the period under consideration, wished that New Commonwealth immigration had not occurred. Secondly, and partly as a consequence of the first conclusion, that there was no commitment by the majority of the indigenous population to the existence or formation of a multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-religious community. Thirdly, this evidence of the attitudes of the indigenous population

towards coloured immigration makes it clear that during this period, there was between the opinion of the majority of the population, and the liberal values of the political leadership and established political opinion in Britain, a considerable gulf.

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 56. Ibid. pp.34-35
 57. Ibid. p.39.
 58. Ibid.
 59. For a discussion of the problems of using unprompted questions in this area, see Daniel Lawrence, 'Race, Elections and Politics' in Ivor Crewe (ed.) op. cit. 1975, pp.61-62.
 60. Bo Sarlvik and Ivor Crewe, Decade of Dealignment (Cambridge, CUP, 1983) p.207.
 61. Political, Social and Economic Review, op.cit. p.6, Table 1.
 62. Figures cited in David Kohler, 'Illegal Immigrants' in New Society 16/8/1973, pp.401-402.
 63. NOP Review 1976, pp.37-8. Figures cited in Richard Rose, Op.cit. p.56
 64. W.W. Daniel, Racial Discrimination in England (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968).

65. David J. Smith, Racial Disadvantage in Britain (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977).
66. Colin Brown, Black and White Britain (London, Heinemann, 1984) p.293.
67. Ibid. p.318.
68. Teer and Spence, op. cit. p.125.
69. Ibid.
70. White Attitudes on Race Relations, op. cit. Chart 23.
71. Ibid. Chart 28.
72. Donley Studlar, 'Immigration and Racial Change' in Gwynne and Rose, op. cit. 1980, p.122.
73. Rose, op. cit. 1980, p.30.

Summary of Part One

Close study of the reactions of the leaders of the Labour Party, Liberal Party, churches and government-sponsored race relations bodies reveals a broad consensus of opinion on the politics of race. This consensus at one level was a dislike of control of immigration from the New Commonwealth, together with support for policies to promote harmonious race relations. At a deeper level, other political attitudes, values and assumptions can be identified.

The view of man contained in this consensus was a social determinist one: it saw the behaviour of people as being closely related to their social circumstances. The liberal consensus expressed much anxiety about the need for rational debate and a discussion of the issues raised in race politics. The lack of discussion - or presence of low-level, irrational discussion - led to much uninformed prejudice, which was evidently harmful to racial harmony. The remedy for this, the consensus believed, was to be a campaign of persuasion and education, to improve the level of debate. Part of this desire for improvement expressed itself in an appeal to self-interest to achieve rational policy. A persistent adherence to the principles of equality ran through the consensus, embracing equality before the law, equality of opportunity and policies of "positive" action.

Much concern was also expressed about the form that

British society should take after the influx of immigrants from the New Commonwealth. One favoured approach was support for policies of a plural group-based society, where group culture and membership took on some significance. Another favoured approach was that of appeals to the ideal of "community" and the existence of harmonious relationships between all people, particularly people of different racial origins.

The evidence produced in Part One of this study has highlighted these ideas as they were demonstrated in race politics. Part Two examines these ideas in detail and comments on inconsistencies and conflicting values within and between them.

PART TWO

Chapter Six: A View of Man

Much liberal reaction to problems in the politics of race has been based on an explanation of behaviour by reference to the social environment.¹ This form of social determinism has placed heavy emphasis on the argument that human action and thinking are closely related to the social circumstances of the individual.² Exposure to external social stimuli, it has been assumed, significantly shapes both behaviour and beliefs. The discussion below does not attempt to assess the accuracy or justification for this view; rather it attempts to identify problems and dilemmas which result from holding this view. Several aspects of the debate are detailed here to illustrate these social determinist assumptions: the opposition of the indigenous population to immigration, identification of black Britons as being in social need, attempts to create the "correct" climate of opinion, programmes to help black Britons and analysis of social disorder; all reflect different facets of this social determinist argument.

The assessment of the indigenous population's response to large-scale New Commonwealth immigration rested heavily on social explanations. Hostility detected on the part of white Britons to continued immigration was attributed to inadequate social provision, which meant that immigrants were seen as a threat to the indigenous population's security in housing and employment.³ The first immigration control measure, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, was

opposed by the Labour and Liberal Parties and the churches; they argued that the only genuine problem caused by coloured immigration was social, and housing in particular. The leader of the Labour Party, Hugh Gaitskell,⁴ Liberal Party spokesman Jo Grimond,⁵ and the Archbishop of Canterbury⁶ were united in viewing immigration from this stance. Poor housing, overcrowding and generally inadequate social provision, they argued, was the real cause for concern, particularly since the majority of immigrants had settled in areas already suffering from inadequate provision. Since the Bill did not address itself to these issues, they found it most unsatisfactory. It is clear that they believed that the correct response was not immigration control measures, but an initiative by the Government to improve the social environment.

By 1965, however, a consensus had been reached amongst established political opinion that some control of New Commonwealth immigration was necessary. These controls were commonly justified in terms of the social problems which would be created by continued immigration at the current level. Labour's 1965 White Paper, Immigration from the Commonwealth, affirmed that the presence of immigrants had led to various new social problems and tensions, and that action must be taken to alleviate the tension.⁷ Jeremy Thorpe summarised the position of his party during its 1965 Annual Conference; he suggested that the major problems were attributable to poor housing, health and education, which produced friction, and could be overcome

with the correct policies. He concluded that these social problems were the real cause of racial prejudice.⁸ The Bishop of Liverpool, speaking in the House of Lords in December 1964, suggested that social tensions could easily give rise to racial tensions, which, having been created, would be very difficult to control.⁹

The argument that poor social conditions led to hostility between races persisted over the years. The pamphlet Labour's Programme: 1973 argued that moves towards integration were required, but were bound to fail whilst poor housing, education and employment bred mistrust and racial prejudice.¹⁰ The Labour Party's Annual Conference in 1976 carried a resolution calling on the Government to alleviate these social problems, which led to racialism.¹¹ The 1976 Liberal Party Assembly similarly urged the Government to make a major effort to improve inner-city areas and thereby eradicate the major cause of racial problems.¹²

Another, and related, argument in race politics was that a "correct" climate of opinion should be created. In this view, immigration control measures were "negative", whilst measures to improve the lives of immigrants already settled in Britain were "positive". James Callaghan, for example, at the Second Reading of the 1971 Commonwealth Immigration Bill, argued that the way to deal with problems of immigration was not further controls, but further improvements in housing and educational provisions.¹³ David Steel, leading the Liberal attack on the 1968

Commonwealth Immigration Bill, condemned the lack of a positive policy towards immigration; he acknowledged that racial tension was increasing but suggested that the only way to fight it was through the underlying social problems.¹⁴ The Community Relations Commission identified a central part of its work of promoting good race relations as acting against racial discrimination in housing and employment and condescending attitudes towards black Britons, all of which led to a lack of racial harmony.¹⁵

This desire to create a "correct" climate of opinion was also strongly evident in the emphasis placed upon a persuasive educational campaign (see Chapter Seven below). There were many calls for action to educate and persuade people towards acceptance of large-scale immigration from the New Commonwealth and the creation of a multi-racial society. Reaction to Enoch Powell's speeches further illustrates this desire, since the liberal consensus believed that Powell's views gained public support on a basis of ignorance and intolerance.

A theme which gathered momentum from the mid-1960s onwards was the perception that many black Britons were living in poor social conditions which restricted their opportunities to participate in society. The solution was to improve the social environment by providing better housing, schooling and employment, and this was the rationale behind the Urban Programme. James Callaghan, Labour's Home Secretary in 1969, introduced the Bill which initiated the Urban Programme, and suggested that the

purpose of the Bill was to fight the social problems experienced by citizens who, because of these problems, were unable to cope.¹⁶ Michael Winstanley, speaking for the Liberal Party, said that his Party regretted the necessity of such a bill to treat cases of special need; that such places existed at all was an indictment of Government policy.¹⁷

Policy in the 1970s emphasised increasingly the effects that racial discrimination had upon black Britons. In 1975, Labour's White Paper Racial Discrimination suggested that there might exist a cycle of social disadvantage, to which was being added the problem of racial discrimination. Such a cycle, the White Paper argued, trapped those caught in it and their children, so that escape was almost impossible.¹⁸ This emphasis on inadequate social provisions was also linked to the idea that such conditions led to law breaking. The Community Relations Commission asserted in its 1972-73 Report that anti-social behaviour was the predictable result of low achievements in education and employment coupled with poor housing or even homelessness, and that measures must be taken to assess the degree of deprivation that immigrants suffered.¹⁹

The Commission for Racial Equality, in its 1979 Report, unhappily prophesied that unless extra funds were supplied by the Government for the areas where black Britons were concentrated, violence might occur, and would obviously harm race relations.²⁰ It was this same theme which Lord Scarman emphasised in his report two years later on the

Brixton riots. He cited with approval President Lyndon Johnson's Address to the Nation which prefaced the 1968 United States Report of the National Advisory Commission for Civil Disorders. The President had argued that poor housing and health, ignorance and discrimination bred both an apathy and violence towards the rest of society, and must be vigorously attacked; Lord Scarman found himself in close agreement with this analysis and saw it as directly applicable to Britain.²¹ Others supported this analysis also: the Commission for Racial Equality believed that the problems of the inner cities must be solved quickly, particularly the needs of young black Britons, in order to remove the underlying cause of riots and disorder.²² The Liberal Party was also committed to higher spending in the inner cities, areas which like Brixton, suffered a type and level of stress which was absent from more prosperous suburbs.²³ The Labour Party Annual Conference in 1981 deplored the lack of Government spending against social deprivation, and declared that without action, such violence would increase.²⁴ Roy Hattersley, commenting on the Scarman Report, predicted that a continued lack of spending in deprived urban areas would deny equal opportunity to Britain's black citizens, whose despair could only lead to violence.²⁵

These arguments indicate the primacy in liberal thinking of social determinist assumptions. Human behaviour and thought was explained in terms of external social stimuli: the hostility of white Britons towards immigration, the low

achievement of black Britons and riotous behaviour, were viewed as problems created by the social environment; reform of the environment was self-evidently the solution. Typically these improvements involved policies to increase material resources so that housing, education and employment opportunities would be enhanced, coupled with a persuasive, educational campaign to promote acceptance of black Britons by the indigenous population.

It is difficult, however, to assess the extent to which a social determinist interpretation has informed policy in this area. Sophisticated contributors to race politics have, it appears, carefully avoided stating a straightforward cause and effect relationship between social circumstances and behaviour; such a relationship has certainly been implied. An example of this difficulty is contained in Lord Scarman's report on the Brixton riots of 1981: he suggested that poor social conditions could never²⁶ be a justification or excuse for social disorder, but that they did form a predisposition for violent protest against an unsympathetic society.²⁷ It is not clear that Lord Scarman's analysis is tenable, however; if people are predisposed to riot, there is a suggestion that they could not choose not to riot. If, on the other hand, they could elect not to protest violently, then social conditions were not dictating their actions.²⁸ Despite his assertion that social circumstances are not an excuse for violent protest Lord Scarman's analysis of both the cause of the riots, and the solution to them, lies firmly in the social

environment.²⁹ His argument appears to be caught on the dilemma between free will and social determinism.

Liberal values in the politics of race strongly reflect the social determinist position. It is not easy, however, to judge whether a policy is a broad humanitarian appeal to help people, or whether a causal link between circumstances and behaviour is being posited, or indeed, both. This is partly because of the universally recognisable fact that all humans are shaped and influenced to some extent by their environmental experiences. Whilst this seems a commonplace, the key issue is whether the individual is able to choose to overcome strong environmental forces or not.

An important point here is the issue of racial discrimination; if black Britons can be shown to have been prevented from participating in British society by racial discrimination, then clearly they will have been strongly adversely affected by their social environment. The full extent of discrimination which bars access to the benefits of British society on racial grounds is hard to assess accurately. In Lord Scarman's opinion, overt institutional racial barriers do not exist in Britain.³⁰ Black citizens are not debarred from opportunities because of official legal or administrative restraints; quite the opposite, since a quantity of legislation exists to give them an equal opportunity to participate.³¹ The extent to which racial discrimination may be practised by private individuals or employers is hard to discover.³² There is

some evidence, for example, that members of different racial groups in Britain achieve varying results in education, housing and employment.³³ This would suggest that any barriers which do exist are not the sole determinants of the performance of black Britons.

Despite some difficulties in interpreting the evidence, it can be seen that a common assumption in race politics has been that individual behaviour is primarily the product of external social stimuli. Such a view forms a broad persuasive ethos which permeates discussion in this area. This ethos can be highlighted by considering an alternative viewpoint. The argument that white Britons were hostile to immigration and settlement of black Britons because they freely chose to be, or because they reasoned that opposition best achieved their interests, has not featured strongly in the liberal account. The argument that black Britons did not reach white British standards in education or employment to some extent at least, because of their own choice, was not prominent; nor was the view that rioters in Brixton had freely chosen to participate canvassed widely amongst liberals.

In many respects, this emphasis on social determinism is understandable. The essence of the idea is that individual behaviour is not taken at face value, but prior causes sought in explanation. To locate responsibility for actions in external pressures appears more compassionate and humane than to place it squarely on the individual. To locate hostility to immigrants, for example, or failure to

achieve perceived goals in prior, social and material factors beyond the individual's control appears to be more understanding and caring. This social determinist viewpoint has, however, important consequences for our attitudes towards people's character and behaviour. Much of what is commonly desired to be ascribed to human beings becomes difficult once human behaviour is viewed as being determined by social forces external to the individual. Whilst social forces are clearly important influences on character, liberal values have heavily stressed these attitudes when interpreting behaviour and beliefs.

The image of the individual which is valued in many areas of politics is of the person who is autonomous, free, reasoning, responsible, moral, creative and active. Social determinist views tend to undermine this image by visualising an individual instead as passive, unable to overcome circumstances, a victim.³⁴ The idea of the autonomous, free and reasoning individual is thrown into some doubt. A strongly determinist analysis may have much to commend it, but it is suggested here that such an analysis predisposes its supporters to certain assumptions about the nature of mankind. When behaviour is viewed as the product of social forces, much else that is valued about people, and many favoured liberal values in race politics, become difficult to hold.³⁵

It appears likely, and there is some evidence from psychological studies, that those individuals who believe that they control their own behaviour are more likely to be

happy, to have a sense of efficacy, and try to control their own environment. Experiments with old people in nursing homes, for example, have shown that those who were told that they could influence the running of the home were more alert and content than those who were the passive recipients of care.³⁶ A sense of personal control over circumstances can apparently be linked to health and survival in certain illnesses.³⁷ A disadvantage for those who hold the social determinist view is that it may lead people to adopt a dreary, fatalistic and passive acceptance of life. The Labour Party's White Paper of 1975 on racial discrimination, for example, described the deprived as being 'an entire group...launched on a vicious downward spiral of deprivation'.³⁸ To describe black Britons in these terms, even if with the most benign of motives, is to say that they have no control of their lives and are totally at the mercy of the environment, and thus may lead to a sense of inadequacy and powerlessness; it is also hard to deny a charge of being patronising.³⁹ This has been more widely recognised in the United States, where black leaders have called for more self-reliance amongst their group members. As James Baldwin observed of American white liberals: 'there is something impertinent in the assumptions they make about me'.⁴⁰

In Britain, this is perhaps most clearly seen in the analyses of Lord Scarman, the Commission for Racial Equality, Roy Hattersley and the Liberal Party of the rioting in Brixton and elsewhere. The reasons, or in Lord

Scarman's words, "predisposition" towards violence, are seen as racialism, disadvantage, poverty, bad housing, unemployment and lack of Government spending. On such an analysis, rioters are not believed to be free to exercise their own will, to choose despite their circumstances whether to riot or not; instead, their rioting is interpreted as determined by external stimuli. This argument strikes at the ideal of harmonious community life, highly valued by liberal opinion, since it creates an atmosphere where violence is legitimate if the perpetrators are in difficult, or deprived, circumstances. It is evident that most citizens in Britain do not riot, even in difficult circumstances of long-term unemployment or hardship, so that only if black Britons are a special and distinct case is this argument tenable. This paternalistic attitude on behalf of liberal opinion directly contradicts any notion of all individuals, regardless of race, being equal. Furthermore, it may lead to a sense of alienation amongst those so identified, and defeat the liberal desire for a strong multi-racial community, which depends on the belief of all that they are part of that community.

Another aspect of this social determinist argument is its implicit denial of variety. It is a generally acceptable proposition that the individual is affected by his environment, and derives different experiences within it. Social determinist views, however, identify groups of people as being uniformly affected by the same social forces; this leads to a view of people as being

predictable, uniform and unspontaneous. This is in conflict with the liberal ideal of promoting a diverse, plural society. In reality, there has been a variety of culture and opinion in the area of race policies. Many black Britons in Brixton in 1981 did not riot, and many achieve the social and economic standard perceived as normal in white society. This variety, once social determinist views are held, becomes difficult to explain, for if all are not uniformly affected by social forces, much of the predictive power of this explanation is lost.

It is an interesting omission in the social determinist account that individual and group attitudes and culture are largely ignored. The emphasis on the needs of black Britons, for example, and policies of positive and reverse discrimination to help them, focus on black Britons as victims of external forces in a white society, particularly of racial discrimination. The social determinist view requires society to be altered in order that black Britons achieve the norm, and pays scant attention to the differences of cultural expectations. Given that racial discrimination does exist and does limit the opportunities of black Britons, the liberal account is weighted very strongly towards correcting adverse external social pressures on black Britons. Little cognizance is taken of black Britons' culture and personal attitudes as a determinant of performance. A more balanced account would acknowledge that racial discrimination existed, but seek conclusive proof that without this discrimination, the

achievement of black Britons would match equally that of other racial groups. Inequality can be a consequence of cultural differences.⁴¹ It has to be shown then, if a social determinist position is to be held, that disadvantages are due solely to external forces rather than to individual and cultural differences. There is evidence to suggest that the culture of a racial group, or possibly social class characteristics, is an important factor in economic and social performance. For example, a survey published in June 1982 by the Commission for Racial Equality on young people and employment, found that youth unemployment in inner-city areas was 59% of Afro-Caribbeans, 42% of whites and 40% of Asians.⁴² If racial discrimination by whites and external social pressures were the sole determinants of youth unemployment, then it would be expected that white unemployment would be lower than the other two categories. This omission of the importance of individual and racial group culture in the social determinist explanation is curious, given the emphasis that is placed on racial group culture, particularly the culture of black British groups, in a plural society (see Chapter Nine below).

A strongly determinist analysis may be the correct one; what is questioned here is whether such an analysis predisposes its adherents to certain assumptions about the nature of man and political life and values. Liberal attitudes on questions of race have strongly emphasised such a determinist stance; this emphasis has tended towards

certain assumptions about human beings which, humane as their intention has no doubt been, have led to a questioning of individual autonomy - another central liberal value.

When behaviour is viewed as being primarily the product of external forces, it loses responsibility for itself, and thus any right to praise or blame. Praise cannot be duly given for improved behaviour if it is understood that such improved behaviour is the result of an improved environment. It is also unclear how morally correct or in liberal terminology, rational, behaviour can be accounted for among the socially determined. Holders of liberal values who, for example, persuade white Britons to accept their view of New Commonwealth immigration, must attribute their success to their own actions and power of persuasion. There can be no praise or blame on this basis for the person hostile to immigration who changes his mind to welcome immigrants; the reason for this change must be that he is submitting to the external forces being applied to him. That in turn makes it hard to admire such a person, unless he freely chooses to behave in this way.

Similarly, blame is hard to apportion if responsibility is removed from the individual and placed instead on the environment. A social determinist might argue that man has no choice but to act in the way which external forces dictate, and thus no responsibility can be held by himself.⁴³ "I could not help it" has often been a successful plea.⁴⁴ A strong social determinist analysis

allows those so identified to say that their own behaviour is not under their control, yet the notion of responsibility is a key component of social relationships and communities.

This has grave consequences; laws forbidding racial discrimination and riotous behaviour have been used in punishing people. Yet if law breakers' behaviour is viewed as the product of external forces, it is inconsistent to punish them for what they could not control. An enforcement of moral behaviour itself relies on the assumption that people are responsible for their own actions.⁴⁵ A sustained effort (see Chapter Seven below) has been made to create a particular moral climate accepting the presence of black Britons. The Commission for Racial Equality, for example, wrote in its 1972 Report that it 'has still to persuade the majority to do what they ought to be doing in any case'.⁴⁶ Now, "ought implies can", and there is little reason to persuade the majority to do something unless they can freely and responsibly choose to do it. To the extent that a heavy social determinist emphasis is pressed, then people are not responsible for their actions; they do not choose them, they are not free to respond to laws and moral exhortations, and should therefore not be punished for their misdemeanours.⁴⁷

This social determinist emphasis has important effects extending to other key liberal ideas identified in this study. Those identified as being socially determined

actors are not autonomous actors able to examine issues and to make rational evaluations about them.⁴⁸ If so, then political debate becomes unnecessary and is replaced by policies aimed at changing the social environment, and thus people's behaviour, to the attitudes and behaviour approved of by liberal opinion. People are not informed so that they can contribute to political debate and make responsible decisions; instead, their social environment is manipulated so that they will adopt the desired view. This aspect of liberal values is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, where it is suggested that political debate has been curtailed and shaped in the area of race politics.

A central concern of liberal values has been for equality; paradoxically, social determinist explanations of human behaviour lead to inequality. Identification of the behaviour of others as a product of external forces or environment, is frequently made by those who deny that their own opinions have been similarly formed: theirs are claimed to be the result of rational analysis and evaluation.⁴⁹ Society is often thus divided into two groups: those whose behaviour is understandable and explainable by reference to prior causes, and those who independently reach their own decisions. For example, the hostility of white Britons to immigration has been subscribed to scarcity of housing or employment, which, once removed, would eradicate the hostility; this presupposes that hostility is the sole product of external

causes, and makes little allowance for there having been a rational evaluation which caused hostility. This philosophy implies considerable intellectual inferiority in such a group, and equally, a moral and intellectual superiority on the part of the group making such a judgement.

The multi-racial, multi-cultural plural society is also touched by social determinism. The plural society celebrates diversity, but if people are seen as malleable by social policy and education, then diversity is severely limited. The social environment becomes a tool of conformity restricting the diverse practices which are desired. The desire for a plural society merges into the desire for peaceful, harmonious community. Again, such a concept is undermined by social determinist ideas since they are likely to lead to a guilt-ridden anomic community.⁵⁰ Problems that occur are viewed, given that men are assumed to be good, as the product of poor social circumstances which are consequently solvable by the correct policies. That problems continue and are not solved is seen as evidence of the culpability of society in not solving them. This theme of guilt runs strongly through the evidence of race relations bodies, reviewed in Part One of this study.

The emphasis on social explanations of behaviour view the social environment as an independent entity which shapes the individual. But social forces have causes. The question is whether individuals make society, or society

individuals.⁵¹ This question is partly a derivation of the "nature versus nurture" debate. Liberal values have laid very heavy emphasis on the theory of society making the individual, or at least some individuals, for liberals generally exclude themselves from such a process. Little emphasis has been placed on the argument that all individuals can or do create and control their own environment. This strong emphasis on social determinist explanations is undoubtedly humane and caring in its intentions, but it is unfortunate that it undermines many of the characteristics which are normally attributed to human beings and which are part of liberal values in race politics as elsewhere. Social determinist theories have been used in the politics of race to explain errant behaviour; once policy recommendations are made, a different view of individuals is required. To recommend policy, to persuade, to exhort, to punish, people must be viewed as free, responsible, moral beings capable of choice. This conflicting account of human behaviour is a consistent strand perceptible in liberal values throughout the area of race politics.

A View of Man: References

1. Preconceptions of human nature are very likely to shape political views. A.H. Halsey writes, 'To explain human behaviour is ipso facto to indicate what is politically possible and often to suggest what is socially desirable. Theories and policies imply each other'; 'Introduction' in A.H. Halsey (ed.), Heredity and Environment (London, Methuen, 1977) p.8. Wallas suggests: 'The student of politics must, consciously or unconsciously, form a conception of human nature, and the less conscious he is of his conception the more likely he is to be dominated by it'. Graham Wallas, Human Nature in Politics (London, Constable, 1927) p.15.
2. For the argument that much contemporary social policy and discussion rest on social determinist principles, see P.T. Bauer, Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1981) p.24; Lincoln Allison, Right Principles (Oxford, Blackwell, 1984) pp.75-6; Theodosius Dobsansky, 'On Genetics, Sociology and Politics' in Perspectives in Biology and Medicine Vol.II, Part 4, 1968, pp.544-554; Phillip E. Vernon, Intelligence: Heredity and Environment (San Fransisco, Freeman, 1979) p.14; Anthony Flew, Sociology, Equality and Education (London, Methuen, 1970) pp.58-60; Ken Richards and David Spears (eds) Race, Culture and Intelligence (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972) p.13; Hans Eysenck,

Race, Intelligence and Education, (London, Temple Smith, 1971) p.81; Edward O. Wilson, On Human Nature (London, Harvard University Press, 1978) p.42; Herbert C. Kelman, 'Manipulation of Human Behaviour: An Ethical Dilemma for the Social Scientist' in Journal of Social Issues 21, 1965, pp.31-46; Albert Bandura, 'Behaviour Theory and the Models of Man' in American Psychologist, 12, 1974, pp.859-869.

3. See the discussion in chapter three of Michael Banton's Promoting Racial Harmony (Cambridge, CUP, 1985) supporting this view. For criticism of this argument, see Donley Studlar, 'Immigration and Racial Change' in W.B. Gwynne and R. Rose, Britain: Progress and Decline (London, Macmillan, 1980) pp.111-128. Studlar reviews the argument that racial hostility is due to scarce economic resources and suggests:

'Such analyses are inadequate because they fail to treat race as an issue on its own merits. Several studies, both of conventional anti-immigrant attitudes and of the more virulent anti-immigrant hostility of National Front supporters, have shown that anti-coloured attitudes are not strongly related to either individual or group economic deprivation' p.20.

Jones suggests that the volatility of the race issue led governments to seek sanctuary in familiar arguments that poor social conditions led to racial tensions which affected black and white Britons alike: C. Jones, Immigration and Social Policy in Britain (London, Tavistock, 1977) p.177.

4. Chapter One, reference 9.

5. Chapter Two, reference 9.
6. Chapter Four, reference 9.
7. Chapter One, reference 22.
8. Chapter Two, reference 33.
9. Chapter Four, reference 13.
10. Chapter One, reference 91.
11. Ibid. reference 96.
12. Chapter Two, reference 80.
13. Chapter One, reference 79.
14. Chapter Two, reference 44.
15. Chapter Three, reference 71.
16. Chapter One, reference 62.
17. Chapter Two, reference 55.
18. Chapter One, reference 94.
19. Chapter Three, reference 60.
20. Ibid. reference 73.
21. Ibid. reference 81.
22. Ibid. reference 90.
23. Chapter Two, reference 90.
24. Chapter One, reference 118.
25. Ibid. reference 121.
26. Chapter Three, reference 77.
27. Chapter Four, reference 79.
28. This is not to dismiss the argument that there may be good humanitarian reasons for helping others.
29. Commenting on crime levels among young adults in 1983, Lord Scarman suggested that such crime was not caused by poor policing: 'It comes from much deeper causes

and they are complex social ones...first and foremost it is a social problem'. The Daily Telegraph 24/3/1983.

30. Lord Scarman, The Brixton Disorders (London, HMSO, 1981) Cmnd 8427, paragraph 6.11. For a view of this issue, see David Mason, 'After Scarman: a note on the concept of institutional racism' in New Community Vol.X, No.1, Summer 1982, pp.38-45; for more general comment, see Nathan Glazer, 'The Ethnic Factor' in Encounter Vol.LVII, No.1, July-December 1981, pp.6-13.
31. Glazer, Ibid.
32. 'Prejudicial attitudes towards coloured people are widespread, but it does not follow that coloured people are discriminated against to a corresponding degree'. Maurice Freedman, 'Race Relations in Modern Britain' in Man, Race and Darwin, (London, Greenwood Press, 1973) p.89.
33. See Chapters Five and Seven above, and also Colin Brown, Black and White Britain (London, Heinemann, 1986).
34. 'A person does not act upon the world, the world acts upon him'. B.F. Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity (New York, Knopf, 1971) p.211.
35. Referring to this view, Parekh argues:

'By treating...[people]...as unwitting and helpless playthings of external causes, it takes away from them the distinctively human capacity to choose or to accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions'.

- Bhikhu Parekh, 'Liberal Rationality and Political Violence' in Robert Benewick and Trevor Smith (eds) Direct Action and Democratic Politics (London, Allen and Unwin, 1972) p.76.
36. David Myers, The Human Puzzle (San Fransisco, Harper and Row, 1978) p.238.
 37. Ibid. p.237.
 38. Chapter One, reference 94.
 39. Edward Banfield, The Unheavenly City (Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1974) p.76.
 40. James Baldwin et al., 'Liberalism and the Negro' in Commentary, Vol.37, No.3, March 1964, p.37.
 41. Instinctive attribution of differences in outcome to unfair external pressures and stimuli is also common in the debate on education. See James Murphy, 'Class Inequality in Education' in British Journal of Sociology Vol.32, No.2, July 1981, pp.182-201; Evelyn Mahon, 'When is a difference not a difference?: a reply to J. Murphy' in British Journal of Sociology, Vol.36, No.1, 1985, pp.73-76; J. Murphy, 'Overrating Inequality and Ignoring the Difference' in British Journal of Sociology Vol. 37, No.3, 1986, pp.392-396.
 42. Commission for Racial Equality, Annual Report: 1982 (London, HMSO, 1982) p.9.
 43. Jonathan Glover, Responsibility (London, Routledge Kegan Paul, 1970) p.1; William Kneale, 'The Responsibility of Criminals' in James Rachels (ed.) Moral Problems (New York, Harper and Row, 1975, 2nd

Edition) p.235.

44. J.D. Mabbott, An Introduction to Ethics (London, Hutchinson, 1966) p.123; J.R. Lucas, Democracy and Participation (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976) p.16.
45. Allison, op.cit. p.75-6:
'Prescribing makes no moral sense unless we can assume that men can respond to moral rules and threats of punishment: in other words that they can be held responsible for their actions. Much modern argument undermines the concept of individual responsibility...If people cannot be held responsible for their actions then morality is logically superfluous'.
46. Community Relations Commission. (3:56)
47. 'Determinism clearly takes the life out of a whole range of moral expressions'. Isaiah Berlin, Four Essays on Liberty (Oxford, OUP, 1969) p.xii.
48. J. Roland Pennock, 'Introduction' in J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman (eds) Human Nature in Politics (New York, New York University Press, 1977) p.5.
49. '...Either we are all the products of our environment or we are not'. Kenneth Minogue, The Liberal Mind p.9.
50. Banfield, Op.cit. p.76.
51. Minogue, Op.cit. p.19.

Chapter Seven: Rationality

The terms "rationality" and "reason" are often used in political discourse as weapons. It is common for publicists to characterise their own views as rational, with the implication that they are considered, intelligent, reasoned and thoughtful, whilst the views of their opponents are irrational, and, if only by implication, ill-considered, impulsive, emotional and unintelligent.¹ Another, and sometimes linked, common usage is to describe activity as rational which decides, by rational thought, upon a goal and then achieves that goal at least cost.² A common feature of the debate on racial policy has been an appeal to rational thought and behaviour. One recurrent theme has been an appeal to rational self-interest. Another has been to rational values and policies. The meaning attached to the term rational in this case has not been made clear, except that values opposed to the liberal tradition's values have been viewed as irrational.

A repeated theme in the liberal response to the issue of race has been that rational, informed, educated, calm debate on the question is necessary. A Liberal Party publication of 1973 stressed that the nature of the debate about racial issues should be changed. It argued that New Commonwealth immigration should not be viewed as a problem, for this allowed populist politicians to exploit the issue; instead of this type of discussion, which it described as

irrational, what was required was debate about the genuine economic and social problems involved.³

Sir Harry Nicholas, General Secretary of the Labour Party, stated in a Green Paper in 1972 that discussion about race over the last ten years had been characterised by emotion rather than reason, and that the Green Paper set out reasoned, unemotional policy.⁴ The Race relations bodies revealed a consistent concern with the type and quality of public debate on race politics. The Community Relations Commission, which saw itself as a persuasive, publicising body, noted the dilemma which this role produced: it could achieve publicity and an increased volume of debate on racial matters, but all too often this debate was unsympathetic to the CRC's aims.⁵ Mark Bonham Carter commented, when first appointed chairman of the CRC, that matters of race had become matters of public concern, and that the CRC often found itself embroiled in embarrassing controversy.⁶ In its report of 1978, the CRC also regretted the nature of public debate on race, which frequently presented New Commonwealth immigrants as a danger to British culture; the CRC considered that such debate was irrational, and that what was required was calm, rational discussion instead.⁷ A briefing document from the Church of England's Board for Social Responsibility in 1965 argued similarly: political debate about race relations had led to words such as "colour" and "immigrant" being charged with an emotion which should be removed from the argument.⁸ These examples suggest that two major points were being

made: firstly, that public debate and discussion were considered important, and secondly, that given public debate of the "right" kind, a rational consensus would emerge.

There was a problem, however, in that public debate on racial issues was not characterised by the emergence of a liberal consensus. Chapter Five of this study shows that the majority of the indigenous population were consistently hostile to New Commonwealth immigration, unhappy at the existence of black Britons, and uncomfortable about the creation of a multi-racial society. When widespread public debate has occurred on race politics, it is this hostility which has often been most prominent, and which has received most public support.

Public debate in a democracy will necessarily entail full and open discussion between diverse views. However, in the area of race politics, it is not clear that sustained or open discussion has occurred. Those who have held views which led them to oppose New Commonwealth immigration have, as the evidence above suggests, been viewed by many important contributors to this policy area as ill-informed, emotional and irrational; their views have been represented as disreputable. Hence, whilst free and open debate was being advocated, the terms of the debate were being narrowed to include only those whose views were considered rational; that is, those whose views were supported by the liberal consensus.

Opposition to the views of those hostile to New

Commonwealth immigration and the creation of a multi-racial society is perhaps best documented in the response of liberal opinion to the issue of immigration control. In the early days of immigration from the New Commonwealth in the 1950s, there was a reluctance to count the number of immigrants arriving at ports and airports, lest this should cause concern amongst the public.⁹ Reticence in discussing matters of immigration and race amongst liberals, both in the 1950s and since, manifested itself in several forms. Liberal opinion formers exhibited a marked reluctance to discuss racial matters publicly.¹⁰ This extended during the 1960s to deliberately keeping to a minimum the expression of opinion hostile to New Commonwealth immigration broadcast by the BBC.¹¹ Indeed, the BBC's official handbook in the 1960s noted the Corporation's commitment to political impartiality and neutrality, but it also stated that it felt no obligation to publicise views considered to be racist.¹²

This was in many ways understandable, given the abhorrence of the racial doctrines generated by the Nazis in the Second World War. Distinctions based on racial characteristics were seen as unacceptable. Britain's position at the centre of a multi-racial Commonwealth, coupled with the growing importance of Third World countries in the post-war world added to this feeling. Liberal opinion was committed to values which refused to recognise racial characteristics or colour as relevant criteria in public debate or policy. Alternative policies

were morally repugnant. Given these commitments, it was an almost insoluble dilemma that so many of those who wanted to emigrate to Britain were racially distinct from the indigenous population; their immigration could not be controlled without giving a strong impression, at least, that such controls were based on racial criteria.

The Conservative Party's reluctance in introducing the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, strongly opposed by the Labour and Liberal Parties, the churches and the quality press, well illustrates this dilemma. The Conservative Party denied that the Act was one which made distinctions on racial grounds, and argued that it simply adjusted the flow of immigrants to Britain in line with the number of jobs available. Opponents of the Act considered it to be a colour bar.

It was the events of the 1964 General Election, particularly the dramatic Smethwick result, which emphasised the possible political consequences of public hostility to large-scale New Commonwealth immigration. The Smethwick result was contrary to the national swing towards the Labour Party, and the result was widely interpreted as due to the electorate's hostility to immigration. Faced with a choice of two candidates, one being identified as a supporter of continued immigration, the other campaigning on a platform strongly opposed to it, the electorate had favoured an end to immigration. This result revealed that when immigration and racial matters were made a major issue in a campaign, an issue of public debate, or the subject

of party controversy, then the majority of the indigenous population were likely to vote in one direction. This realisation led to a consensus being formed by those who had earlier opposed the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act: the Labour Party, Liberal Party and the churches all changed their policy on immigration by 1965 to support for control measures.¹³ Even liberal Conservatives such as Francis Pym and Nigel Fisher, who had opposed the 1962 Act quickly became converted to its necessity. By 1965, as argued in Part One of this study, a consensus existed amongst liberal opinion that control of New Commonwealth immigration was necessary.

Another feature of this consensus, reached at much the same time, was that the issues of immigration and race should be depoliticised, taken out of party politics. It was thought that racial matters were not fit subjects of party division and controversy.¹⁴ Responsible political leaders, it was commonly argued, should provide leadership in disseminating the morally correct values in this area. Even the leadership of the Conservative Party, who could have made much of the change of heart by the Labour and Liberal Parties over immigration control, forbore to take much electoral advantage, such was the commitment to liberal values.¹⁵ For the Labour and Liberal Parties, liberal values and electoral advantage were in conflict: extensive public debate over racial matters would have led to their being identified increasingly as "pro-immigration", and since the Smethwick result, this was

evidently a vote-loser. In addition, widespread public debate, because it would have been largely hostile to New Commonwealth immigration and the newly-arrived black Britons, could in their view only harm race relations.

This desire for a cross-party consensus and for the exclusion of race from party politics was frequently expressed. Dr Michael Winstanley remarked, during the second reading of the 1968 Race Relations Act, that race relations were one of the few political areas where it was essential to achieve a consensus, and clear leadership should be given to achieve this end.¹⁶ At the second reading of the 1971 Commonwealth Immigration Bill, James Callaghan supported the principle of consensus also, arguing that party divisions on racial matters would be of no assistance to either the immigrant community or the indigenous population.¹⁷ The Commission for Racial Equality also pressed consistently for immigration and race relations to be kept free of party politics.¹⁸ Similarly, the British Council of Churches' document 'Immigrants in Britain' considered that there was enough common ground between the parties to permit reasoned debate, from which irrationality and prejudice should be excluded.¹⁹

A new concept, which entered public debate towards the end of 1964, was that of a "multi-racial" society, to which, it was suggested, everyone was committed. The Labour Party's White Paper Immigration from the Commonwealth, published in 1965, for example, stated quite clearly that 'the United Kingdom is already a multi racial

society'.²⁰ The Bishop of Liverpool, speaking in 1964, said that he believed that Liverpool was ready to accept the notion of a multi-racial Britain as the heart of a multi-racial Commonwealth.²¹ The second report of the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Committee pointed out that although it was obvious that the New Commonwealth immigrants who had come to Britain would stay, many people had not yet recognised the fact that Britain would become a multi-racial society.²² By 1968, James Callaghan, as Prime Minister, was stating that Parliament, the Government and all Parties in the country were united in their commitment to Britain's development as a multi-racial society.²³

The assertion that Britain was, and welcomed being, a multi-racial society, was made against a background of sparse public debate. The presence and continued arrival of New Commonwealth immigrants tended to be presented as a fait accompli, the needs of which it was not necessary to discuss. Katznelson suggests that the political consensus on racial matters after 1965 used race relations bodies to remove the subject from mainstream politics.²⁴ Immigrants' needs and wishes, Katznelson argues, were allocated to non-governmental bodies such as the Community Relations Commission and the Race Relations Board, and thus both Government and Parliament were distanced by this strategy from the issues themselves. The appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury as Chairman of the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants also strengthened this tactic. As an overtly non-party political

establishment figure, he could deflect criticism and head a persuasive moral campaign. To this can be added that this strategy also had the effect of displacing somewhat the hostility of the indigenous population towards immigration, to various ill-defined, and somewhat powerless, quangos and establishment figures.

A further example of the curtailment of public debate can be seen in the reactions to Enoch Powell's "rivers of blood" speech in 1968. Powell called for an almost complete halt to New Commonwealth immigration and the repatriation of black Britons. The indigenous population's support for Powell's views, as shown in Chapter Five, was very strong. Established liberal opinion, however, viewed the matter differently, and implicit in this view was a need to restrict this kind of public debate and discussion. There was fury at Powell's breach of the liberal consensus on racial matters. David Ennals, whilst a Minister in the Home Office, spoke of the enormous damage that Powell's speech had done; he acknowledged that both Powell and his supporters spoke with sincerity, but that community relations would suffer as a result.²⁵ The Liberal Party lamented the 'hysteria' which followed Powell's utterances.²⁶ The Community Relations Commission argued that public expression of the view that New Commonwealth immigrants were undesirable and a burden to Britain could only damage the whole community.²⁷ In its view, Powell's speeches had had the effect of making blatantly hostile emotions against black Britons a socially acceptable

public statement.²⁸ The Race Relations Board, seeing the subject of race relations made public in all its extremes, called for an identification of the real problems of immigration, rather than inflammatory discussions of 'myths and stereotypes'.²⁹ Likewise, the British Council of Churches argued in 1969 that public debate had 'considerably retarded' good race relations.³⁰ It supported the formation of a positive policy on immigration, and an attack on the assumption that immigrants were inescapably a problem, in which the size of the problem was directly related to the size of the immigrant population.³¹

Much of the significance of Powell's "rivers of blood" and subsequent speeches lay in his having broken the liberal consensus on racial matters. It broke the consensus in arguing for a complete halt on immigration, and in introducing the idea of repatriation; it broke the consensus in being expressed in emotive, vivid terms, and in possessing a very different concept of good race relations. Until this point, the leadership of the main parties, aware of the hostile opinions of the indigenous population, believed that maintaining a "low profile" on racial matters, whilst the government-sponsored bodies worked for better race relations, would keep immigration out of party politics and public debate. Powell's much-publicised views forced racial issues into the open, and made it evident that race relations could not easily be dealt with. To much liberal opinion, Powell's sentiments

could only be seen as harmful in their effect and as an encouragement to public debate which was far from rational or informed.³²

Another example of the desire to limit public debate in the area of race politics is more relevant to the 1970s and 1980s. A number of commentators, mainly Conservative, have argued that a climate of opinion has been created which has made the expression of certain views unacceptable and illegitimate.³³ Typically, such views would include serious discussion of, and support for, policies such as repatriation, hereditary intelligence based on racial groupings, the rejection of multi-cultural education, and so on. In the nature of things, the claim that certain views are unacceptable is hard to assess, since if such a climate of opinion exists and is successful, open discussion of such views is not likely to be welcomed. It does seem likely, however, that the accusation of "racism" has silenced some opinions and some debate.

Related to the demand for the right kind of debate, a major thrust in the liberal argument has been both to emphasise the ignorance of those illiberal views and to stress the need for education in the correct values to create the correct moral climate. Those opposed to immigration from the New Commonwealth have been presented as unintelligent and ill-educated. Roy Jenkins, in 1966, viewed opposition as either 'political opportunism' or 'personal inadequacy', playing on the ignorance of others.³⁴ James Callaghan argued in 1968 that prejudice

was derived from fear and ignorance; the way to overcome it was education.³⁵ The Liberal Party's 1965 document on race portrayed those opposed to immigration as being irrational, with fixed views which could not be swayed by argument.³⁶ In 1964 the Bishop of Liverpool pressed the need to persuade people of the benefits of a multi-racial society, and help the many less able people who required help to understand the real nature of race problems.³⁷ The Bishop of Worcester in 1976 praised the Race Relations Act of that year and the multi-racial society, which had brightened the drab, monotonous lives which so many people led.³⁸ The liberal argument has not permitted the notion that prejudice could survive education, or be founded not, as they suggested, in ignorance, but in knowledge. Along with this analysis was a strong emphasis on the educational process. The Race Relations bodies were particularly keen on this and saw education as one of their main roles. The NCCI spoke of the need to educate white Britons away from their prejudices, and saw this purpose as its chief occupation.³⁹ The CRC also argued that the way to improve race relations was by education.⁴⁰ The Liberal Party affirmed that it was clearly the job of Liberals to stand against manifestations of irrational emotion and behaviour.⁴¹ The Labour Party called for a sustained educational campaign which would secure greater knowledge and understanding of immigrants.⁴² These sentiments illustrate clearly the liberal assumption that correct information and education would in turn lead to correct

behaviour in liberal terms.⁴³

It can be seen that there is a good deal of evidence that liberal opinion has been anxious to restrict public debate in the area of race policy. It has held strong views about what constituted rational policies and values in this area, and it has recognised that not everyone shared these views. Critical response and debate has been seen as improper. Liberals would perhaps argue that by the time that popular hostility to immigration was clearly manifested, in the 1964 General Election in Smethwick, for example, the creation of a multi-racial society had already occurred and that this was not worth debating as such. The issue still open to debate was how to make such a multi-racial society more harmonious. Such an argument, however, reflects liberal values and assumptions. It is unlikely that the typical supporter of Enoch Powell viewed the matter in the same way. The Powellite position, supported by a substantial majority of the indigenous population, was to return to the situation before mass immigration, by stopping further immigration and repatriating those black Britons already living in Britain. Naturally such views were anathema to liberal opinion and quite outside the bounds of normal political debate, and attempts to limit publicity of Powellite views reflected this.

For the liberal, public debate in the area of race politics poses problems, tending as it does to raise conflict, emotions, passions and hostility to black Britons. These conflicts and passions can only be kept

largely dormant if public debate is restricted and channelled in certain directions. Thus, those who demand rational discussion and debate face a dilemma when public debate produces results which are undesirable. The two objectives of encouraging free, open public discussion and reaching a consensus around rational policy, have not been easily reconcilable. Commitment to free public debate might be seen to be instrumental: it should be the means which leads to the goal of rational policy. However, to the extent that public debate is simply instrumental to achieving rational values, and fails to do so, it is sacrificed to achieve rational policy. The result of this is an unwillingness to accept that there can be a worthwhile public debate about matters of race and immigration when it does not reach conclusions perceived as being rational.

The question arises of how particular values and policies can be identified as being "rational". As has been seen, what have been taken to be rational views include the idea that immigration is not a threat or danger, that no distinction must be made on racial grounds, and that the real issues are social and economic ones. Coupled with this is the claim that approach to these issues must be calm, cool and unemotional. A problem in accepting this definition of rational argument (and, it is implied, the politically and morally correct definition) lies in the strong, social determinist emphasis evident in liberal opinion (see Chapter Six above). Such social determinism

identifies behaviour, opinions and thought as being largely, if not wholly, determined by social environment. However, if this is combined with the view that certain groups can be characterised as irrational, then society is implicitly divisible into two groups: those whose values are determined by their environment, and those who claim that this is the case. To claim that the values of others are the product of social experience requires the assumption, implicit or otherwise, that one stands outside the shaping influences of one's own social environment. This, as Marx clearly recognised, is to divide society into groups perceived as superior and inferior to each other, and this strikes at the desire for equality so evident in this area of policy.⁴⁴

The essence of the appeal to the words "rational" or "rationality" is the implication and sometimes strong assertion that the values and policies so described are morally correct ones, and that the alternatives are both irrational and morally incorrect. Yet social determinist attitudes undermine this claim. Unless holders of rational values can stand outside the social system, it must be assumed that they are as much influenced by their social environment as those they view as holding irrational values.⁴⁵ Once it is argued that values and opinions are socially determined and that all opinions are subject to this process, difficulties arise. The truth of opinions in the social sphere becomes controversial. It is difficult to find an impartial arbiter who can judge which argument

is the more rational; social truth becomes relative and subjective. This is compounded by the promotion of a plural society which encourages a variety of social environments. If all values and interpretations of social issues are seen as the products of differing social forces, it is difficult to see how one interpretation can be accepted as the more rationally compelling. This in turn implies a relativity of ideas and values which contrasts oddly with the assertion that there are rational, morally correct solutions to particular policy problems. Despite these considerations, it is clear that holders of rational values in the area of race policy have not been relativistic in their attitudes. They have supported policies which they have termed rational, with the implied contention that debate, of the right kind, will lead to agreement about social policy. The contention has been that consensus on views that are in some sense true or morally correct can be achieved.

A further aspect of the demand for rational debate in the area of race politics is that the basic nature of this kind of debate may exclude certain views from public discussion. The demand for rational debate carries with it implicit assumptions about what constitutes such debate. It requires serious factual analysis, an "objective" consideration of issues, the avoidance of emotionalism and the deployment of educated skills. However, those who have opposed large-scale immigration from the New Commonwealth and the creation of a multi-racial society have been mainly

of a conservative outlook, and such conservatism typically relies upon intuitive feelings, a sense of nationhood, tradition, identity, continuity, and the appeal to traditional values, emotions and morality.⁴⁶ In passing, it is worth noting that there is a contrast here between the desire for cold, factual, unemotional rational discussion and the ideas of plural society fostered in the area of race. The values of the plural community are those of diversity, spontaneity, warmth and emotional commitment. The rational liberal is curiously out of place in such a scenario (see Chapter Nine). It is clear that in the general debate on racial issues, two different political languages are in use: one appeals, at least in part, to what it claims is largely factual, unemotional analysis, the other appeals to intuitive, emotional values. The call for rational discussion and debate, by its nature, has a tendency to inhibit contribution to public debate expressed in the conservative form.⁴⁷

Finally, it should be noted that the liberal tradition in the past and in other policy areas has often supported the idea that the goals of public policy can be correctly arrived at only if full, open public discussion is allowed. Restriction of public debate, it is argued, is likely to mean that alternative policies, which may be the correct ones, are not heard. It is also commonly asserted that a consensus about the goals of public policy is harder to achieve without full public debate and discussion. John Stuart Mill's On Liberty contains a celebrated defence of

the freedom of speech on these grounds. Mill had a deep-seated dislike of restriction of either freedom of speech or of opinion.⁴⁸ Cowling has attacked Mill's argument by suggesting that Mill only favoured freedom of speech for the rationally educated rather than those of a more conservative disposition.⁴⁹ Whatever the merits of Cowling's attack on Mill, his argument is redolent of what happened in British race politics.

Rational public debate has been presented as a means towards an acceptance of the fact of large-scale New Commonwealth immigration to Britain and the creation of a multi-racial society. This political end has been justified in terms of rational action to achieve maximum collective and individual benefit.

In the earlier years of political concern over immigration, during the 1960s, continued New Commonwealth immigration was often defended in simple economic terms. Britain's economy, it was argued, required more labour: New Commonwealth immigrants supplied this, and hence Britain benefited from immigration. For example, Labour's 1965 White Paper Immigration from the Commonwealth commented that immigrants made a very valuable contribution to Britain's economy.⁵⁰ The Liberal Party's Immigration Group argued similarly in 1965 that Britain's economic requirements, particularly the need for skilled workers, meant that immigration was both beneficial and necessary.⁵¹ The British Council of Churches believed that suggestions that immigrants took more out of Britain's economy than

they contributed was irrational.⁵² The NCCI stressed both the financial and economic benefit derived from immigrants and the way in which they had added to Britain's cultural life.⁵³ Roy Jenkins said in 1966 in a speech to race relations activists that hostility towards immigrants was irrational and often the result of looking for scapegoats in society.⁵⁴ An interesting contrast appears here between this argument and that cited earlier in Chapter Six, that opposition to immigration was due to competition for scarce resources such as housing, education and employment. It seems unlikely that those who were told that their opposition to New Commonwealth immigration was due to such competition would view such immigration as a benefit to themselves economically. It is worth noting that this attribution of opposition to immigration to competition for resources further restricted public debate, for it did not present concern over race as an issue which should be tackled in its own right. Instead, it deflected attention to material social issues such as housing and employment.

As Britain's economy faltered in the mid-1960s and unemployment began to rise, this argument of economic benefit was superseded by another. The argument which replaced, and sometimes overlapped it, was one which emphasised how much Britain had gained culturally, socially, and religiously from immigration. Lord Elton, in a book published in 1965, summarised the current debate over New Commonwealth immigration and concluded that it was

rarely claimed that such immigration aided Britain's culture.⁵⁵ This was the case until the mid-1960s when much more emphasis began to be placed on the cultural benefits gained from a multi-racial Britain; it came to be argued that it was in the interest of white Britons to welcome immigrants. This argument will be further explored below in discussing pluralism (see Chapter Nine). The general idea surfaced in Labour's Programme: 1973, which agreed that Britain was a multi-racial society which gained a great deal from the variety of cultural, religious and ethnic traditions within it.⁵⁶ The 1979 Liberal Party manifesto claimed similarly that Britain had gained a diverse and rich culture as a result of New Commonwealth immigration.⁵⁷ The Bishop of Worcester believed that the new cultural structure of society was something for which everyone should be thankful.⁵⁸ In his Christmas Day sermon in 1976, the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed the sentiment that far from being a menace, immigration had provided a source of enrichment to British life.⁵⁹ The NCCI in its 1966 Report stated that black Britons had made a valuable contribution to both Britain's economy and culture.⁶⁰

Support for and appeal to economic and cultural self-interest makes a number of economic assumptions about rational self-interested actors. Self-interest can be defined as 'the constant and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his own condition'.⁶¹ Rational self-interested persons can consider and weigh alternatives,

know what they want and what pleases them best; they choose the most efficient way to achieve their goals. The appeal to self-interest in the area of racial issues, however, must be viewed against the evidence of the majority of white Britons' hostility towards the phenomenon of New Commonwealth immigration. The evidence surveyed in Chapter Five above suggests that the perceived self-interest of the indigenous majority required no immigration and the maintenance of a largely homogenous society. Tacit acknowledgement of this can be seen in these liberal appeals to self-interest, which aim to persuade those of differing views to change their primary preferences. Those who have favoured immigration and the creation of a multi-racial society have in effect said to those who disagreed with them, 'you are mistaken about your own best interests'. Resistance to New Commonwealth immigration was interpreted as fear of financial and cultural loss; this interpretation was linked to the view outlined earlier that hostility was created because immigrants were seen as competitors for scarce social resources. It was assumed that those who were hostile to New Commonwealth immigration felt as they did because they did not believe that such immigration would advance their financial and cultural interests and benefit them. Implicit in this was a further assumption that those opposed to immigration desired financial and cultural gain above other values. Consequently, it was argued that the creation of a multi-racial society would benefit all its members and allow them

to realise their economic and cultural goals with greater success.

Although this appeal to rational self-interest was made to justify acceptance of immigration and a multi-racial society, the full implications of this argument do not appear to have been drawn. Basic to the rational self-interest argument is the idea that individuals know and can rank their preferences. In the area of race, there are several possible orders of preference: one is implicit in the argument above, associated with liberal opinions, that Britain benefited financially and culturally from immigration. This argument assumes that such immigration does indeed foster economic growth, whilst economists are divided on this point.⁶² Another preference might be for a Britain financially poorer, but culturally homogenous; cultural enrichment as an ideal has not been defined in any detail (see Chapter Nine below). It seems therefore that white Britons might legitimately doubt whether New Commonwealth immigration would bring either financial or cultural benefit.

Appeals to economic and cultural benefits derived from immigration are only likely to succeed with those who value the chance of greater wealth and racial and cultural diversity more than they do existing society. However, opponents of immigration may value cultural and racial homogeneity more than they value the possibility of more wealth and cultural diversity. They may believe that a diverse society does not reflect their view of national

identity, or that it may be harder to govern or police.⁶³ Genuine appeals to rational self-interest must allow those appealed to to rank their preferences, and must allow that they have real preferences. Two aspects of the liberal approach to the area of race politics particularly hinder this. Because public debate has been curtailed, it is difficult to appeal to people's self-interest, for the absence of debate makes it hard to assess what people's preferences are. Secondly, social determinist assumptions lead to a dismissal of the preferences of many as being simply the product of a somehow distorted social environment. The temptation is then to assume that the holders of such views are not assessing their own interests rationally or do not know their own preferences.

The area of race politics may, in any case, be one where appeals to self-interest will be ineffective. Olson has argued that there are instances where rational self-interested actors may not act to achieve their common interests.⁶⁴ In some circumstances, the rational actor will act as a "free rider", taking the benefits of the action of others without sharing the costs. The non-unionised member in a highly unionised workplace who receives pay rises negotiated by the union is a good example of this. Even if the majority of white Britons believed generally that benefits resulted from New Commonwealth immigration and the creation of a multi-racial society, it does not follow that they decided to accept the costs. The utilitarianism on which the argument

for economic rationality in the race area is based assumes that people have interests in common which override their self-interests. A "free rider", faced with large-scale immigration, may argue that while he prefers a homogenous nation, he will take any economic and cultural benefits he can from black Britons. This might mean that the "free riding" white Briton would be happy to use black Britons for low paid, menial jobs, but that he is also happy to discriminate against black Britons when they impinge upon other areas of life about which he feels strongly. The indigenous white "free rider" may on this basis only see his interest as using black Britons for what he can gain from them.

This argument may go some way towards explaining the dilemma mentioned in Chapter Five above, of evidence showing general support for principles of equality and fairness towards black Britons coupled with a willingness to discriminate on racial grounds. The "free rider" may, given the existence of a distinct racial group, want to see measures to promote good race relations and a peaceful society, but also want to minimise his personal costs and maximise his benefits by freely discriminating against black Britons when he chooses.

For these reasons, it may be very hard to promote the acceptance of black Britons by the majority of white Britons on the basis of voluntary self-interest. White Britons may decide that their preference is racial and cultural homogeneity and that they value this more than

racial and cultural diversity. If white Britons calculate that there are benefits to be had from black Britons, it may always be tempting for them to act as "free riders" who discriminate against black Britons to take any benefits they may provide.

If self-interest is promoted as a main policy for liberal race attitudes, it is likely that only those policies which give private individuals direct and tangible benefits are likely to succeed. In this area, however, the capacity of public policy to provide private economic and social gain is unlikely to be great. And the "free rider" is likely to be able to obtain the benefits without paying the costs. Consequently, the persuasiveness of self-interest arguments is likely to be slight.

Conclusion

Several tensions exist in the ideas of rationality detailed above. Commitments to rational values and policy are in conflict with commitments to encourage public debate. Appeals to self-interest lead to a number of problems: for the rational self-interested actor there is often little to be had for paying for collective goods which he may reason will be gained without his participation. The white Briton who is self-interested may calculate that it is in his self-interest to use any benefits which black Britons may bring whilst denying them full access to social and economic benefits.

The two ideas of rational debate and self-interest also

raise conflicting principles. The desire for rational debate assumes that people will compromise and work towards rational policies. Appeals to self-interest, however, expect people to receive tangible benefits and to be unwilling to make compromises if so doing would involve a sacrifice.⁶⁵

Rationality: References

1. "'Reason" is a term of universal currency but its value changes and it is what the user gives it'. W.H. Greenleaf, Order Empiricism and Politics (Oxford, OUP, 1964) p.3. For similar sentiments, see M. Cowling, Mill and Liberalism (London, CUP, 1963) p.32; Steven Lukes, 'Some problems about Rationality' in Bryan Wilson, Rationality (Oxford, Blackwell, 1977) p.207; Alfred Shultz, 'The Problem of Rationality in the Social World' in Dorothy Emmet and Alasdair Macintyre (eds), Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis (London, Macmillan, 1970) p.89; K.R. Minogue, The Liberal Mind (London, Macmillan, 1963) p.25; J.D.B. Miller, The Nature of Politics (London, Duckworth, 1962) pp.33-35; John Wilson, Equality (London, Hutchinson, 1966) p.141.
2. Applications of rational activity to politics are numerous; see for example Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy (New York, Harper and Row, 1957), and also John Plamanatz, Democracy and Illusion (London, Longman, 1973) and Jack Lively, Democracy (Oxford, Blackwell, 1975).
3. Chapter Two, reference 73.
4. Chapter One, reference 83.
5. Chapter Three, reference 45.
6. Ibid. reference 46.
7. Ibid. reference 70.
8. Chapter Four, reference 20.

9. In the 1950s, as Professor Birch suggests,

'...the high minded liberal principles of the prevailing ideology...found it hard to countenance the counting of incoming coloured immigrants...Home Office spokesmen made little attempt to conceal their view that the public were best kept in ignorance of inconvenient facts of this kind.'

See Anthony H. Birch, 'Westminster and Whitehall' in W.B. Gwynne and Richard Rose, Britain, Progress and Decline (London, Macmillan, 1980) p.59-60. Hannan

Rose describes this period in a similar manner:

'During the 1950s attempts were made to bring governmental attention to the problems associated with the concentration of immigrants especially from the West Indies, in particular areas... The firm answer of the government was that any special measures either to help immigrants or to regulate their entry as members of the Commonwealth to the mother country, would be discriminatory and undesirable. In effect, the orthodox position of the authorities represented the general orientation of anti-racist opinion, which felt secure in the belief that major politicians agreed with the consensus of liberal views.'

See Hannan Rose, 'Race Relations in British Politics' in Robert Benewick and Trevor Smith (eds) Direct Action and Democratic Politics (London, Allen and Unwin, 1972) p.143.

10. See Michael Banton, Race Relations (London, Tavistock, 1967) p.383; William Deedes, Race Without Rancour

(London, Conservative Political Centre, 1968) p.21; Sheila Tobias, 'The Ostrich Game' in The Listener, 15/4/1965 pp.543-545; Alan Watkins, 'Thoughts on the Race Bill' in The Spectator, 16/4/1965; Lord Radcliffe, 'Immigration and Settlement: some general considerations' in Race, XI, 1, 1969, pp.35-51; Dilip Hiro, Black British, White British (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971) pp.287-288.

11. Hiro, Ibid. p.288. Chapter six of Hiro's book contains other examples of restriction of public debate. For academic discussion of this point, see Donley Studlar, 'Immigration and Racial Change' in W.B. Gwynne and R. Rose, op. cit. 1980; Douglas E. Ashford, Policy and Politics in Britain (Oxford, Blackwell, 1981) chapter seven; Frank Reeve, British Racial Discourse (Cambridge, CUP, 1983) chapter five in particular.
12. Colin Seymour-Ure, The Political Impact of the Mass Media (London, Constable, 1974) p.112.
13. Chapter Two, references 21 and 31. Referring to the Labour Government's 1965 White Paper which led to

stronger controls on immigration, Richard Crossman wrote:

'We felt we had to out-trump the Tories by doing what they would have done and so transforming their policy into a bipartisan policy'.

See R. Crossman, The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister Vol.1 (London, Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1975) p.149-50.

Chapter Two, references 21 and 31. The internal conflicts and pressures for immigration controls within the Liberal Party, particularly in the West Midlands are detailed in Stephen Deakin, 'Immigration Control: the Liberal Party and the West Midlands Liberals 1950-70' in Immigration and Minorities Vol.3, No.3, November 1984.

Chapter Four, references 13 and 18. The Church leadership's change of policy at this time is reviewed in Stephen Deakin, 'The Churches: Immigration and Race Relations' in New Community Vol. XII, No.1, Winter 1984-5, pp.101-113.

14. See Ronald Butt, The Power of Parliament (London, Constable, 1967) pp.279-285; Ashford, op. cit. p.239;

Zig Layton-Henry, The Politics of Race (London, Allen and Unwin, 1984) pp.60-62. Katznelson writes, '...the central dynamic of British elite reaction to Third World migration has been an attempt to structure the politics of race out of conventional politics'. Ira Katznelson, Black Men, White Cities (London, OUP, 1973) p.125.

15. Paul Foot reviews Conservative Party attitudes to immigration and race in this period in his book Immigration and Race in British Politics (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965) chapter seven.
16. Chapter Two, reference 52.
17. Chapter One, reference 77.
18. Chapter Three, reference 70.
19. Chapter Four, reference 24.
20. Chapter One, reference 24.
21. Chapter Four, reference 15.
22. Chapter Three, reference 10.
23. Chapter One, reference 44.
24. Katznelson, op. cit. p.180.
25. Chapter One, reference 55.

26. Chapter Two, references 47 and 49.
27. Chapter Three, reference 36
28. Ibid. reference 38.
29. Ibid. reference 37.
30. Chapter Four, reference 53.
31. Ibid. reference 54.
32. Opinion on whether Powell's speech initiated public debate or whipped up irrational hatred is divided. Alan Watkins has written that Powell 'quite deliberately decided to exploit the one issue on which many people are scarcely rational'. Alan Watkins, 'Enoch and After' in New Statesman, 26/4/1968 p.53. William Deedes op. cit. p.27, wrote:

'The arguments about this [Powell's] speech can rest. Yet it is relevant to add how much of the feeling generated by his words sprang from a conviction among many, who could not be described as racist, that they had been kept in the dark. Mr Powell could only ignite what was there to be ignited. Much of the combustible material was not racism.'
33. Scruton, referring to immigration writes:

'There is perhaps no greater sign of the strength of liberalism (a strength which issues not from popular consensus, but from the political power of the semi-educated) than that it has made it impossible for any but the circumlocutory to utter an illiberal sentiment

on this subject, and on the subject of race which forms such a substantial part of it.'

Roger Scruton, The Meaning of Conservatism (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1980) p.68. Ronald Butt has stated that 'tactics were therefore adopted which deliberately smothered and circumvented public discussion'. Ronald Butt, 'On Britain's Decline' in Encounter Vol. LII, March 1979, p.46.

Enoch Powell made a similar charge in 1968; he spoke of:

'a tiny minority, with almost a monopoly hold upon the channels of communication, who seem not to know the facts and not to face the realities and who will resort to any device or extremity to blind both themselves and others'.

Enoch Powell, in The Times, 17/11/1968.

34. Chapter One, reference 39.
35. Ibid. reference 60.
36. Chapter Two, reference 26.
37. Chapter Four, reference 17.
38. Ibid. reference 66.
39. Chapter Three, reference 23.
40. Ibid. reference 41.

41. Chapter Two, reference 61.
42. Chapter One, reference 16.
43. This assumption is common to liberal philosophers. See Jack Lively, The Social and Political Thought of Alexis de Tocqueville (Oxford, Clarendon, 1962) p.248; John Passmore, The Perfectibility of Man (London, Duckworth, 1970) p.163 and also John Passmore, 'The Malleability of Man in Eighteenth Century Thought' in Earl Wasserman (ed.) Aspects of the Eighteenth Century (London, OUP, 1965).
44. Marx commented on this problem in The Third Thesis on Feurbach. He wrote that:
- 'The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated. This doctrine has therefore to divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society.'
- See T.B. Bottomore and M. Rubel (eds), Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976) pp.82-83. See also Bhikhu Parekh, 'Liberal Rationality and Political Violence' in Robert Benewick and Trevor Smith (eds),

Direct Action and Democratic Politics (London, Allen and Unwin, 1972) p.76.

45. As Passmore suggests, this social determinist argument 'raises the awkward question: who in a corrupt society shall frame the laws?' John Passmore op. cit. 1970, p.173. For an extended discussion of this problem, see Barry Holden, 'Liberal Democracy and the Social Determination of Ideas' in J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman (eds), Liberal Democracy, Nomos XXV (New York, University Press, 1983) pp.289-312.
46. Spearman, for example, in her review of the many letters received by Enoch Powell supporting his views after his 1968 "rivers of blood" speech, found that hardly any supported him on "racial" grounds. Of those who gave reasons for their support, the largest majority named fears for British culture and liberty. See Diana Spearman, 'Enoch Powell's Postbag' in New Society, 9/5/1968, pp.667-669. Radcliffe, Op.cit. describes from a conservative position New Commonwealth immigrants as a 'large alien wedge' and suggests that 'the immigrant is a stranger, the man of

different ways, different assumptions and different implications in his speech and silence'.

Banton identifies the conservative position in the race area in similar terms:

'In its intellectual form, this is the argument that for a group of people to constitute a nation they must have a feeling of identity and continuity with their past. England's past was that of a White nation. For those English people who valued this particular sense of history the attempt to add to the nation a group who manifestly lacked such roots was asking a great deal.'

Michael Banton, Promoting Racial Harmony (Cambridge, CUP, 1985) p.37.

47. Tension between rational knowledge and traditional values is discussed in Michael Oakshott, Rationalism in Politics (London, Methuen, 1962), chapter one particularly. See also W. H. Greenleaf, Oakshott's Philosophical Politics (London, Longman, 1966). Brian Barry largely dismisses what he describes as 'anti-rationalist conservatism' in Brian Barry, Political Argument (London, Routledge Kegan Paul, 1965) pp.55-58.

48. The well-known passage in On Liberty reads, 'If all mankind minus one were of one opinion mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind', and 'we can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavouring to stifle is a false opinion, and if we were sure, stifling it would be an evil still'. J.S. Mill, On Liberty (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977) pp.76-77.
49. Cowling op. cit. pp.103-105.
50. Chapter One, reference 24.
51. Chapter Two, reference 25.
52. Chapter Four, reference 25.
53. Chapter Three, reference 22.
54. Chapter One, reference 39.
55. 'It is seldom, if ever, claimed that an Afro-Asian immigration on the present scale will make this country healthier or better educated or more law abiding or more powerful, or that it will fortify or enrich our inherited traditions and aptitudes or increase social harmony.'
- Lord Elton, The Unarmed Invasion (London, Geoffrey Bles, 1965) p.55.
56. Chapter One, reference 91.

57. Chapter Two, reference 87.
58. Chapter Four, reference 66.
59. Ibid. reference 67.
60. Chapter Three, reference 22.
61. Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations (London, Methuen, 1961) p.111.
62. See for example K. Jones and A.D. Smith, The Economic Impact of New Commonwealth Immigration (Cambridge, CUP, 1970); C. Wilson et al. Economic Issues in Immigration (London, Institute for Economic Affairs, 1970).
63. See Chapter Nine for discussion of some of the difficulties inherent in a plural society.
64. Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Choice (Harvard, 1965).
65. For a more detailed discussion of this problem, see Parekh op. cit. p.70.

Chapter Eight: Equality

Several different themes of equality have been pressed in the debate on racial issues. They include equality before the law, equality of opportunity and policies of positive discrimination or "positive" action.

Equality before the law is best seen as a concept for procedural justice: people should not be treated differently by the law for irrelevant reasons. The argument in the area of race has been that race, colour and country of origin are irrelevant criteria upon which to base law or policy. This contention can be seen clearly in discussion of immigration control, where much of the discussion has centred on the ideal of equality before the law. The first measure to control immigration from the New Commonwealth, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, was presented by the Conservatives as a measure which did not breach the principle of equality before the law. The Act was based on the granting of work vouchers and employment opportunities, and therefore discriminated on the basis of work skills rather than racial criteria. Patrick Gordon Walker, speaking for the Labour Party, attacked this Bill at its Second Reading, claiming that R.A. Butler was the instigator of legislation which was openly based on principles of racial discrimination.¹ Clement Davies, speaking for the Liberal Party, stated that however much the Government argued to the contrary, the Bill would be seen by all as racially discriminatory.² By 1965,

established political opinion was agreed that control of New Commonwealth immigration was necessary, but this change of policy was justified by criteria which were economic and social rather than racial. Labour's 1965 White Paper, Immigration from the Commonwealth, which tightened the immigration controls introduced by the Conservatives, linked New Commonwealth immigrants to social problems and tensions, and suggested that this justified the enactment of more controls.³ The Liberal Party's Report on immigration and race, published in 1965, made the same point: it claimed that some controls on immigration were necessary because of Britain's failure to match social conditions to modern needs.⁴ The British Council of Churches welcomed the bipartisan consensus on immigration which emerged in 1965, but argued that if the consensus was ever expressed in terms of distinctions made on grounds of colour, it should be strongly rejected.⁵

Since 1965, successive immigration control measures in 1968, 1971 and 1981 have tended to be justified by their supporters as being necessary to avoid social tension. Opponents of such legislation have argued that it was based on racial and colour characteristics. The 1981 British Nationality Bill, for example, was opposed by Roy Hattersley on these grounds: he asserted that, having in the past assured his black constituents that they were equal before the law, he would now have to inform them otherwise.⁶ What the Labour Party wanted, he said, was a policy on nationality and immigration which was not founded

on racial bias, favouring one race over another.⁷ David Steel, leader of the Liberal Party, said of the same Bill that it would affect black Britons far more than any other group, and was therefore a racist measure.⁸ The Archbishop of Canterbury also opposed the Bill, and sought instead a bill which would enshrine the principles of equal respect and regard for all people.⁹

A persistent theme in the argument on immigration control has been that racial characteristics should not be considered relevant criteria for controlling immigration. It has been argued that the law should not make distinctions or discriminate on racial grounds, but treat all equally regardless of race.

A common justification for race relations initiatives, the Race Relations Acts in particular, has been equality of opportunity. David Ennals, speaking for the Labour Party during discussion of the 1968 Race Relations Bill, stated that the Government was determined that all citizens in Britain should have equal opportunity not only before the law, but also in housing, employment, education and all social provision.¹⁰ The Liberal Party saw the purpose of the Bill to ensure that black Britons enjoyed the same opportunities as white Britons.¹¹ The Race Relations Board saw a dual purpose in the Bill: whilst positively creating an environment of equal opportunity for black and white citizens alike, it would help to eliminate racial discrimination.¹² The churches also supported this Bill, and the Archbishop of Canterbury viewed it as a measure to

promote good race relations, as defined by Roy Jenkins as equal opportunity, cultural diversity and mutual tolerance.¹³

Roy Jenkins introduced the 1976 Race Relations Act in the Commons and stressed that black Britons should have equal treatment in Britain regardless of colour, race or national origins.¹⁴ Equal opportunity, he said, was the core of Labour's policy.¹⁵ The Bishop of Worcester, representing the Church of England in the debate in the Lords, said that members of the churches would wonder whether, as a result of the Act, black Britons would enjoy a greater equality of opportunity.¹⁶ The Commission for Racial Equality, initiated by the 1976 Race Relations Act, was charged with the task of promoting equal opportunity as one of its main functions.¹⁷ In a policy document of 1978, the Liberal Party affirmed that it believed in a multi-racial Britain, in which everyone had equal opportunity.¹⁸

It is clear that equality of opportunity has been a recurrent justification for policies in this area; however, definition of this equality has often been vague and imprecise.¹⁹ The ideal of equality of opportunity is usually taken to denote that every individual should have an equal opportunity and right to develop his life and talents in the way he chooses, towards his desired rewards.²⁰ Individuals should compete in society on grounds of merit alone; other factors, such as social background, race and sex should entail neither advantage nor disadvantage. There is in this an assumption that

these are attributes for which the individual is not responsible. Application, ability and merit are the key criteria in a judgement of equal opportunity. It has been suggested by Benn and Peters that talk of "equality" in equality of opportunity is, in fact, misleading.²¹ Supporters of equal opportunity are not arguing, they suggest, that everyone should be treated equally or have identical opportunities. Rather, supporters of equal opportunities are claiming that certain factors, of which they disapprove, should not be considered relevant criteria in the distribution of benefits and handicaps. The choice of "relevant" criteria is not completely arbitrary: unequal treatment on grounds that are approved of by the supporters of equal opportunity is considered acceptable.

The provisions of the 1976 Race Relations Act illustrate such assumptions well. The Act forbids direct racial discrimination, defined thus:

'A person discriminates against another in any circumstances relevant for the purposes of any provision of this Act if on racial grounds he treats that other less favourably than he treats or would treat other persons.'²²

The Act also forbids indirect discrimination, that is, to apply to another a condition or requirement such that the proportion of persons of another race who can comply with it is 'considerably smaller than the proportion of persons not of that racial group who can comply with it' and which cannot be shown to be 'justifiable irrespective of the colour, race nationality or ethnic or national origins of

the person to whom it is applied'.²³ The Act defines "racial grounds" as any of the following: 'colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origin', whilst "racial group" is defined as 'a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins'.²⁴

When 'colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins' are chosen as being criteria which should be irrelevant in promoting equality of opportunity, other inequalities result. This can be seen by examination of some successful prosecutions under the 1976 Race Relations Act. The following case details are taken from summaries which appeared in annual reports of the Commission for Racial Equality, and are reasonably typical examples of such prosecutions.

Firstly, two cases of racial discrimination. In the first case, Messrs L. Hussain and M. Sabar, both of Pakistani origin, applied for work as weavers in a Yorkshire textile factory, the vacancies having been advertised in the local newspaper. The men were told that the jobs had been taken, but later a white officer of the Bradford Commission for Racial Equality telephoned the company, and was invited for interview. It was subsequently found that all two hundred workers at the factory were white Britons. The firm admitted that they had discriminated on racial grounds and paid damages to the two men.²⁵ In the second case, Mr Dawinder Singh Juttla, an Asian who had come to Britain from Kenya, saw a flat

advertised in his local newspaper, and arranged to meet the landlord and view the flat. When Mr Juttla arrived at the meeting with his wife, the landlord told him that the flat had just been let. However, a telephone call half an hour later from an English friend of Mr Juttla's established that the flat was still available. The landlord eventually paid damages for discrimination on racial grounds.²⁶

The 1976 Act also made indirect discrimination illegal, that is, practices which adversely affect one racial group more than another. In the third case, a girl of Pakistani origin applied for a job as a shop assistant with British Home Stores. She was told that she would have to wear the store's uniform, an overall over a skirt. The girl said that she could not do this: because of her Muslim faith and her Pakistani origin, she had to cover her legs with trousers. The store argued that it could not change its rules on uniform, and the girl withdrew her application. She subsequently initiated proceedings contending that the ban on her wearing trousers was an act of indirect racial discrimination. British Home Stores argued that it was to the benefit of their national commercial image that their shop assistants wear uniform. The Industrial Tribunal which heard the case decided that such uniform requirements were detrimental to persons such as the girl of Pakistani origin, and that it was an easy matter for the store to change its uniform regulations. The Tribunal ruled that the girl had been indirectly discriminated against, and that British Home Stores should change its uniform rules so

that women of similar faith and origin could wear a uniform which included trousers.²⁷

The fourth case also entails indirect racial discrimination. Mr Sewa Singh Mandla, a Sikh, tried to get his son admitted to an independent private school in Birmingham. He made it clear to the school's headmaster that his son, as a Sikh, would wear a turban. The Headmaster, a convinced Christian, was equally adamant that no pupils at his school were to wear turbans since these were symbols of a religion of which he as a Christian could not approve, and that turbans were in any case hostile to the school's ethos. Mr Singh, with the help of the Commission for Racial Equality, brought proceedings against the school, alleging indirect racial discrimination under the 1976 Act. After an appeal, the Headmaster was found guilty of such discrimination.²⁸

These cases illustrate that to hold racial grounds as being irrelevant for denying equal opportunity leads to other inequalities. As was noted above, a common justification for the Race Relations Acts has been that the law should promote equality of opportunity for all citizens; none should have special rights. It is clear, however, in the cases cited above, that under the 1976 Act, the law can favour members of a racial group by bestowing rights upon them which would not be bestowed on other groups.

In cases of direct discrimination in accommodation and employment, the freedom of, for example, the landlord or

employer to exercise his preferences or judgement is restricted. This restriction of freedom may be justified on many grounds, not least that it nominally applies to all citizens, black or white, so that if a black British employer or landlord discriminated against a white Briton on racial grounds, he would also be guilty under the 1976 Act. However, law does not operate in a vacuum; it affects and is affected by the society which it serves. The society favoured in race politics is a plural one, where racial group identity is recognised and encouraged (see Chapter Nine). Indeed, the 1976 Act encourages this thinking when it explicitly uses the term "racial group" and defines it in terms of colour, nationality, race and the like. In a group-based society where one group predominates both in numbers and resources, as white Britons do in Britain, such equal opportunity legislation is likely to bear most heavily on members of this majority group. There are evidently fewer occasions for minority racial group members to exercise any preference they may have to deny equal opportunities to other group members.

In a group-based society, a policy of equality of opportunity is likely to favour one group more than another because equal opportunity is an individualistic ideal which does not fit neatly with the provisions of a group-based plural society. Equality of opportunity policy presents life as a race between individuals competing on grounds of merit and application. Law and social policy is aimed to make the race as fair as possible so that merit and

application are the sole deciding factors in the race. This rests on equality before the law and since individuals face equal law and rules, any subsequent inequalities are more acceptable. Once racial groups replace individuals in the equal opportunity formulation and since groups control and dominate sectors of society, some groups have to be held back and have their opportunities restricted.

Of even greater interest are the examples of indirect discrimination cited above. In these cases, the law is choosing between, and favouring, the culture of one group rather than another. A girl of Pakistani origin who prefers to wear the dress of her racial group clashes with the preferences of a shop chain whose owners' preferences belong to another racial group for a particular dress style. At issue here are the cultural preferences of two racial groups. This is even more evident in the case of the Christian headmaster and the Sikh schoolboy. The Headmaster, on personal religious grounds, and for the promotion of his private school's culture, as embodied in uniform requirements, insists that turbans should not be worn by his pupils. The father of the pupil insists, again for reasons of religion and culture, that his son be allowed to wear a turban. Deadlock results. The Sikh father appeals to the law and secures a decision that his son has been discriminated against. The law must adjudicate and choose between the cultural and religious practices of different minority groups (for the sort of Christianity espoused by the headmaster must surely be held

only by a minority) and promote and protect one at the expense of another.

These cases raise in an acute manner the question of relevant criteria for discrimination. The preferences in these cases, by British Home Stores and by the Christian headmaster are not racial discrimination as such. The preferences involved act to exclude certain persons unless they are able to accommodate themselves to certain cultural practices and preferences. There is nothing explicitly "racial" about such cultural preferences save that in Britain, "racial groups" are often synonymous with a particular type of culture and religion. The girl of Pakistani origin who will not wear a skirt, or the Sikh who insists upon his son wearing a turban are only discriminated against because of their own cultural preferences rather than on racial grounds.²⁹ British Home Stores' uniform policy would apply equally to a white shop assistant who preferred to wear trousers, but who would, presumably, have no case before the law.

In these two examples of racial discrimination, the freedom of members of one racial group to practise their religious and cultural preferences is being promoted at the expense of members of another racial group's religious or cultural preferences. This is a dilemma: policies justified as increasing equal opportunity are decreasing the opportunities of some citizens. The dilemma stems from the application of individualistic equal opportunity practice to a group-based plural society. These cases

highlight some of the difficulties a plural society may have when it encourages cultural diversity. Should not all groups have freedom to practice their culture unless such practice harms others? How is it to be decided that the Sikh schoolboy has been harmed more than the Christian headmaster? (This problem is discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine below). An interesting insight into this area is provided by a remark of Alex Lyon, one of the spokesmen for the Labour Party during the debates on the 1976 Race Relations Bill. He stated that one of his justifications for the Bill was that treating black Britons adversely compared with white Britons was to do black Britons serious harm.³⁰ The true purpose of the Act would then appear to be to ensure some form of equality between groups rather than ensuring equality of opportunity. Minority group members can be treated differently, it seems, but only in a beneficial sense; this, as is suggested below, is a different concept from equality of opportunity.

Policies of equal opportunity assume that people have, at least, a roughly equal chance to compete in society and for social benefits. It is, however, often argued that for some people equal opportunity is a sham. Their social circumstances, it is suggested, mean that they cannot begin to compete upon an equal footing with others. One solution is to provide special help, opportunities, facilities and benefits to those viewed as being especially disadvantaged and who appear unable to use their equal opportunities fully.

Special help programmes have been directed towards black Britons since a number of them have been perceived to be living in poor social circumstances, receiving a less than adequate share of society's benefits and suffering racial discrimination. Since the mid-1970s this collection of handicaps has increasingly been referred to as "racial disadvantage".³¹ Support and special help provisions to overcome the disadvantage have taken several forms, and a number of terms have been used to describe these policies. Terms such as "positive action", "affirmative action", "positive discrimination" and "reverse discrimination" are in frequent use, and sometimes applied with apparent indiscrimination to the same policy. There has been a good deal of confusion over what policies of equal opportunity, positive discrimination, positive action and reverse discrimination involved. A study of local authorities, for example, found widespread uncertainty and differing interpretation of what constituted equal opportunity, practice and policy.³² The author of an important work about positive discrimination suggests '...there is probably no more misconceived and misunderstood (sometimes deliberately) social policy practice in Britain'.³³ Some classification of these terms is needed, derived from the history of their development. Positive discrimination programmes are initiatives based upon a perceived need or disadvantage. They typically involve public spending in attempts to remedy or ameliorate social problems, and as such they are not unusual in British social policy.

Programmes designed to meet special needs with special provisions for particular groups or geographical areas have been implemented in education and housing, for example.³⁴ The 1966 Local Government Act was the first government initiative to allow extra public spending by local authorities to cater for black Britons.³⁵

In the aftermath of Enoch Powell's "rivers of blood" speech, Harold Wilson, as Prime Minister, initiated the Urban Programme. The aim of the Programme was to channel public spending towards geographical areas of deprivation, particularly those areas where immigrant groups were concentrated. The defence of the Programme and subsequent attempts to "revitalise" the inner cities via Inner City Partnership schemes in the light of racial disturbances, have insisted that the basis of action was not race. Although many commentators have seen an implicit commitment in these programmes to help black Britons³⁶ there has been a marked reluctance to use unambiguously racial characteristics as a basis for resource allocation.³⁷ The Urban Programme was initiated by the Local Government Grants (Social Need) Bill. James Callaghan, introducing the Bill in the Commons, spoke in the broadest terms and suggested that it was aimed at the poor of whatever colour, and was designed to give all Britons a fair opportunity and chance in life.³⁸

The 1970-71 Report of the Race Relations Board claimed that the Board supported "affirmative action" and "positive action", both terms apparently being used to describe the

same thing.³⁹ To the objection that special measures to help minorities were unfair, the Report replied that this objection rested on the belief that special programmes gave black Britons more than everyone else, when their real purpose was to give the same opportunities as the majority already enjoyed.⁴⁰

In its 1972-73 Report, the Community Relations Commission argued that all that black Britons needed was an atmosphere conducive to equal opportunity. The CRC itself was committed to the creation of a society in which black Britons could participate equally in all spheres.⁴¹ The Race Relations Board's Report covering the period from January 1975 to June 1976 reveals an interesting development in policy. The Report suggested that there was a myth that minority groups were receiving favoured treatment. It distinguished between privileged treatment and different treatment necessary to achieve equal opportunity, and foresaw this distinction being increasingly misunderstood as the special problems of black Britons were tackled in the future.⁴² The CRC's Report for 1975-76 welcomed the Labour Government's white paper, 'Racial Discrimination', which emphasised the existence of racial disadvantage, which the CRC defined as '...those disadvantages that stem from discrimination, intolerance and less equal treatment'.⁴³ The eradication of this disadvantage required, argued the CRC, many changes in public policy in the areas of social services, unemployment and housing. The CRC suggested that Government should

remove all inequalities in these areas which were based on race, colour and national origin; this required not only equality before the law but also "positive policies" to give more social resources to black Britons.⁴⁴ What was meant by "positive policies" was not detailed, but this strand of thought led the CRC to support, if only temporarily, positive discrimination based upon racial criteria. The CRC's justification for this was that until enough was known about the disadvantages experienced by black Britons, positive discrimination in their favour was necessary.⁴⁵

It is evident that a developing strand of thought has been the need to direct special help towards black Britons. Public policy should, it has been argued, not only provide equal opportunity in the sense of forbidding overt discrimination, it should also take positive action to help black Britons. The impression gained from the evidence cited above is that the early Urban Programme in the late 1960s was aimed towards geographical areas of need in which black Britons lived. From the early 1970s, the emphasis shifts towards a more racial group oriented policy, and this movement becomes more pronounced with the discovery of racial disadvantage. It is difficult to identify clearly and exactly what is being suggested when "different" treatment is called for in order to provide equality of opportunity. It is particularly difficult to decide how much policy and values are based on racial criteria, and their desired outcome.

The 1976 Race Relations Act took this "positive action" still further. Sections 35, 37 and 38 allow members of racial groups to be specifically offered education and welfare facilities in preference to members of other groups if such an offer is to meet the 'special needs' of that group.⁴⁶ Reflecting the difficulty of terminology and definition mentioned above, discussion of these provisions in the 1976 Act reveals both ambiguity and difference of opinion. Lord Scarman, in a lecture given in 1977, described these provisions as 'reverse discrimination' and noted that discrimination against members of a disadvantaged group was illegal, but discrimination in their favour was legal.⁴⁷ The author of an academic study of the law and racial discrimination has written that 'the 1976 Act firmly repudiated reverse discrimination'.⁴⁸ Alex Lyon, speaking in the Commons about the Bill, said that he disliked the term "positive discrimination", and preferred to consider the measures as correcting the disadvantages felt by particular racial groups.⁴⁹ Similar sentiments were voiced by Roy Jenkins, Labour's Home Secretary, when he introduced the Bill. Referring to these provisions, he stated that it would be wrong to ignore the disadvantages suffered by so many black Britons, and that formal principles of equality must be set aside in their favour.⁵⁰

In practice, the 1976 Act allows training bodies, for example, to offer members of a particular racial group access and encouragement in training opportunities if it is

observed that during the last twelve months:

1) there were no persons of that group among those doing that work in Great Britain

or

2) the proportion of persons of that group among those doing that work in Great Britain was small in comparison with the proportion of persons of that group among the population of Great Britain.⁵¹

Similarly, employers are allowed to offer 'encouragement' to employees of a particular racial group, 'to take advantage of opportunities for doing the work of that establishment'.⁵² Again the main criterion in justifying this provision is that members of that racial group are under-represented in that firm. Lustgarten suggests that under this provision a black Briton employed by a firm may be given training, apprenticeships, secondments for example, which a white employee is denied.⁵³ Examples of the exercise of these provisions include the mounting of 'special access' courses in colleges of further education and polytechnics.⁵⁴ A local authority in London has offered places on a local government administrative training officer scheme to black Britons only.⁵⁵ Derbyshire has recruited trainee police cadets from minority groups without the usual necessary qualifications, in the hope that special training will raise the cadets to the standard necessary for selection.⁵⁶

It must be noted that these provisions apply to education and training and not to job selection, where it would be

illegal to use race as a criterion of selection or exclusion for employment.⁵⁷ In practice, however, it is arguable that once minority group members had been given special training opportunities that this could affect the selection process as well.⁵⁸ The underlying argument for these provisions is to facilitate equality of opportunity by giving those with the potential the opportunity to become qualified when otherwise, it is argued, racial discrimination and racial disadvantage would prevent this. Such people are given special help, but once qualified they are left to compete within the framework of policies of equal opportunity. There is an ambiguity, as was suggested above, about how these provisions should be regarded. Policies of reverse discrimination are common in the United States, where the term often refers to policies giving special and preferential treatment to minority groups who are believed to suffer, or have suffered, disadvantage or discrimination. Often this favourable treatment is enacted by way of a quota system; in policing a racially divided area, for example, the police force might be required to reflect such racial divisions in the composition of its force.⁵⁹ Such quotas are forbidden in Britain by the 1976 Act, although some local authorities have set "targets" by which they have tried to reflect the composition of the local population in their work force.⁶⁰ Such targets require some implicit or explicit racial quota.⁶¹ Reverse discrimination need not employ quotas, however, and the relevant provisions of the 1976 Act are perhaps best

regarded as reverse discrimination without the use of specific quotas.

The Commission for Racial Equality has been the main body responsible for implementing the 1976 Act, and its publications on employment for example, are revealing.⁶² The CRE has been keen to identify areas where workers from minority racial groups are under-represented in employment categories in comparison with the majority group in a firm's work force, or in that particular labour market. If workers in a racial group are found to be under-represented, then in the view of the CRE, "positive action" should be taken to rectify the situation. Specific quotas or ratios are not mentioned, but there is an apparent guiding principle of fair or equal representation. The overriding idea is that black Britons should be represented throughout the work force in proportion to their numbers in society.

The Bishop of Liverpool argued in 1976 for what he called positive discrimination, the spending of more money in the inner city areas where many black Britons lived.⁶³ In his report on the Brixton riots, Lord Scarman repeated his support for 'positive action'; he suggested that black Britons had special needs which justified special help in geographical areas of deprivation. He emphasised that the need of such people, rather than any other criterion, should be the basis of such special help, and believed that Parliament had already acknowledged this in the principles of sections 35, 37 and 38 of the 1976 Act.⁶⁴ Later in his

report, Lord Scarman described these policies as 'positive discrimination', an indication of the various terms used in this area.⁶⁵ During the Parliamentary debate on Lord Scarman's report, Roy Hattersley called for special programmes of help, particularly in the area of employment for young black Britons; this would not be granting them greater opportunities than their white counterparts, but the same opportunities, which were at present denied them.⁶⁶

Policies of "positive action" and reverse discrimination have frequently been justified by participants in the race area as helping the disadvantaged so they can then compete within a framework of equal opportunity. Another principle, however, is proposed by those who desire an equality of outcome whereby racial groups are spread proportionately throughout society according to their numerical presence. This idea of proportionate racial equality appears to be playing an increasingly important part in the debate.⁶⁷ The reverse discrimination provisions of the 1976 Act are justified on the grounds of being a counterweight to racial disadvantage; positive action is employed to achieve a fair representation of racial groups throughout society. There is also incidental evidence to support this interpretation: Lord Scarman, for example, spoke in his report of the need to recruit more coloured police so that the racial identity of the police force 'fully reflects that of the society the police serve'.⁶⁸

Conclusion

The evidence considered above reveals that several different ideals of equality have featured prominently in the politics of race. These ideals rest upon differing assumptions, some of which conflict with others.

The principle of equality before the law has been an overriding one, and early in the debate on immigration control, this principle declared that racial characteristics should be discounted in law making. Immigration control, it was argued, should be based on other criteria, such as the nation's economic needs or its capacity for absorbing immigrants. Equality before the law is individualistic in emphasis: each citizen (or in the case of immigration control, each potential citizen) stands before a law which is impartial. Racial group membership on racial or national characteristics should neither benefit nor disadvantage the individual under this principle.

Policies of equality of opportunity, however, rest upon somewhat different principles. Equal opportunity policies are competitive and individualistic in emphasis, and extend the principles of the market place to all aspects of life. Competitors are set free from arbitrary constraints and are then free to compete to the full extent of their ability and commitment. The basic premise underlying the Race Relations Acts has been the acknowledgement of constraints of racial discrimination, and a series of measures to

remove them.

However, as suggested above, the outcome of the Acts has been somewhat different from the major justifications used to support them. Removing one inequality has rarely achieved a neutral effect. The aim of helping a racially identifiable minority requires the restriction of some of the freedoms and preferences of the racially identifiable majority. The principle of indirect discrimination, the practice of which was forbidden under the 1976 Act, served to promote minority racial group culture without safeguarding the group culture of the majority. Under the prohibitions of the Act, equal opportunity to participate has been denied to members of the majority racial group where minority group cultures are in conflict with them.

The problems that occur appear to stem from the group-based nature of policy in the Race Relations Acts, which has been justified by the individualistic ideal of equal opportunities. A conflict between group-based and individual-based policies is apparent. "Positive action" policies, which have been interpreted above as being based on the achievement of proportionate racial equality without the explicit use of quotas, rest upon assumptions very different from those of equal opportunity. Proportionate racial equality policies assume that proportionate equality is an indication of the existence of equal opportunity.⁶⁹ There is a supposition of fundamental equality which dictates that there should be a proportionate distribution of all racial groups at every level in society, and that

when this distribution does not occur proportionately, this is the result of policies of racial discrimination. There is an assumption that under-representation must always be due to a denial of fair competition, and external influences. As was suggested in Chapter Six, the social determinist argument leads to an emphasis on external forces having restricted the abilities of the individual.

Proportionate racial equality is very different from equality of opportunity. Equal opportunity policies are concerned with a distribution based on merit alone, all competitors being placed at the same starting-point. There is an emphasis on individual responsibility and initiative, whereby the well-motivated will forge ahead of the poorly-motivated. Individual motivation, culture and ability is the key to success or failure in the society based on equal opportunity. Proportionate racial equality policies, however, do not take into account questions of motivation or ability, and their desired end is a numerically proportionate representation of all racial groups. Equal opportunity entails the opportunity or freedom to fail, and is based on performance rather than a predetermined rate of success and failure. Policies of proportionate racial equality presume an innate equality of both ability and motivation in all racial groups, which is not necessarily borne out by the evidence. Studies of the performance of different racial groups in Britain suggest that all black Britons do not achieve in a uniform manner: school pupils of Asian ethnic origin appear, for example, to achieve

better results than black Britons of West Indian ethnic origin.⁷⁰ Such disparity presents the liberal outlook with several conflicts; if all groups are supposed to be innately equal, and if racial disadvantage is also experienced equally, then it is difficult to account for disparities of achievement without also considering questions of motivation. This naturally brings into focus the issues of culture and the controversial area of racial differences in inherited intelligence.⁷¹

This neglect of the influence of culture contrasts markedly with the liberal desire for a plural society. As is argued below in Chapter Nine, the desire for a culturally plural society emphasises the enrichment and value of different group cultures. Proportionate racial policies, however, discount the cultural differences both between different minority racial groups and between them and the majority racial group. The plural society also celebrates diversity, yet proportionate equality leads inevitably to uniformity of outcome: if a minority racial group accounts for twenty per cent in society, then they must achieve twenty per cent of, for example, jobs in every sector of the work force, regardless of individual choice. This argument can also be said to presuppose that the cultural aspirations of the majority racial group will naturally be desirable for each of the minority groups; it overlooks both the diversity of aspirations within the minority groups, and presupposes a universal appeal of the aspirations of the majority racial group. (For more

discussion of this point, see Chapter Ten below).

Policy in this area has been hesitant, or even coy, in explicitly identifying people on racial grounds for preferment. A gradual move is apparent, however, from the 1970s, when area-based policies were defined to help the disadvantaged, towards specific race-based policies. The reverse discrimination provisions in the 1976 Act, Lord Scarman's recommendations in his report on the Brixton riots, Roy Hattersley's remarks on the Scarman Report, the CRC's report of 1975-76, all point towards action based upon racial criteria. Such policies run counter to the principles of equality before the law, which have always excluded racial identity or origin as criteria. One policy demands that the question of colour is an unsound criterion, the other demands that formal equality before the law be waived on the criterion of colour. Policies to benefit members of one racial group must always involve a lack of advantage to the members of another racial group. The cost of these policies, it could be argued, is that disadvantaged white Britons can be denied on racial grounds certain opportunities offered to black Britons. Once racial group membership is taken into account in identifying and helping the needy, then (unless resources are infinite) special help to one particular group must necessarily discriminate against those of any other racial group. In principle, therefore, it is difficult to distinguish between those who would benefit black Britons on racial grounds, and those who would discriminate against

them on the same grounds.⁷²

Equal opportunity would suggest that members of all racial groups should be allowed to compete for the benefits of society on the grounds of ability and application alone. If some of these benefits are then distributed by reference to racial group membership rather than on grounds of merit, equality of opportunity is denied.

Equality: References

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2. Chapter Two, reference 10.
3. Chapter One, reference 24.
4. Chapter Two, reference 24.
5. Chapter Four, reference 24.
6. Chapter One, reference 112.
7. Ibid. reference 113.
8. Chapter Two, reference 89.
9. Chapter Four, reference 78.
10. Chapter One, reference 50.
11. Chapter Two, reference 51.
12. Chapter Three, reference 43.
13. Chapter Four, reference 55.
14. Chapter One, reference 101.
15. Ibid. reference 104.
16. Chapter Four, reference 65.
17. Chapter Three, reference 69.
18. Chapter Two, reference 85.
19. Geoffrey Bindman, 'The law, equal opportunity and affirmative action' in New Community Vol.VIII, 3, Winter 1980, pp.248-260.
20. For discussion of the idea of equality of opportunity, see S.I. Benn and R.S. Peters, Social Principles and the Democratic State (London, Allen and Unwin, 1959)pp.118-120; Bernard Williams, 'The Idea of Equality' in J. Feinberg (ed.) Moral Concepts (Oxford, OUP, 1969); John H. Schaar,

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 22. Race Relations Act, Section 1.1 (a).
 23. Ibid. Section 1.1 (b) 1, 2.
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 26. Commission for Racial Equality: Annual Report 1981 (London, HMSO, 1982) p.100.
 27. Commission for Racial Equality: Annual Report 1980 (London, HMSO, 1981) pp.78-9.
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 29. This aspect of the provisions of the 1976 Act is briefly discussed in I.M. Stevens and D.C.M. Yardley, The Protection of Liberty (Oxford, Blackwell, 1982) pp.96-7.
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32. Young, Ken and Connolly, Naomi, Policy and Practice in a Multi-Racial Society (London, Policy Studies Institute, 1981) p.48.
33. John Edwards, Positive Discrimination, Social Justice and Social Policy (London, Tavistock, 1987) p.1.
34. For a discussion of positive discrimination, see John Edwards, op. cit. 1987, and John Edwards and Richard Batley, The Politics of Positive Discrimination (London, Tavistock, 1978).
35. Section Two of the Local Government Act 1966 gave the Home Office powers to reimburse local education authorities up to 50% of their expenditure incurred for 'special provision in the exercise of any of their functions in consequence of the presence of substantial numbers of immigrants from the Commonwealth whose languages and culture differ'.
36. Edwards, op. cit. 1987, chapter five; Edwards and Batley, op. cit. 1978, chapter three; Malcolm Wicks, 'Urban Deprivation' in Nick Bosanquet, Labour and Inequality, (London, Heinemann, 1980) pp.264-78; Katherine Jones, Immigration and Social Policy in Britain (London, Tavistock, 1977) pp.177-83; David McKay and Andrew Cox, 'Confusion and Reality in Public Policy: the Case of the British Urban Programme' in Political Studies Vol.26, No.4, 1979, pp.491-506; Joan Higgins et al., Government and Urban Poverty (Oxford, Blackwell, 1983) chapter

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37. For an extended treatment of the reluctance of British policy to acknowledge race explicitly, see Frank Reeves, British Racial Discourse (Cambridge, CUP, 1983).
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 39. Chapter Three, references 48, 49, 51.
 40. Ibid. reference 50.
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 45. Ibid. reference 67.
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 47. Lord Scarman, at the Sixth Annual Minority Rights Group Lecture, published as 'Minority Rights in a Plural Society' in New Community Vol. VI, 3, Summer 1978, pp.41-52.
 48. Lawrence Lustgarten, Legal Control of Racial Discrimination (London, Macmillan, 1980) p.24.
 49. Chapter One, reference 108.
 50. Ibid. reference 103.
 51. Race Relations Act 1976, 5.37.
 52. Ibid.
 53. Lustgarten, op. cit. p.26.
 54. Bindman, op. cit.

55. The Daily Telegraph, 1/7/1982.
56. Ibid. 12/5/1983.
57. The Home Office Guide to the 1976 Act suggests, 'This exception does not, however, make it lawful for the employer to discriminate at the point of selection for such work'. Racial Discrimination: A Guide to the Race Relations Act 1976 (London, HMSO, 1977) paragraph 7.11.
58. Bindman, op. cit. p.253 writes:

'As the training or encouragement of those who do not belong to the relevant minorities is not obligatory however, an employer who wished to carry his preference to the selection stage could often in practice do so'.

For an opposing view, see Lustgarten, op. cit. p.26.
59. Reverse discrimination and preferential treatment have led to extensive discussion; see, for example, M. Cohen, T. Nagel, and T. Scanlon (eds), Equality and Preferential Treatment (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977); Nathan Glazer, Affirmative Discrimination: Ethnic Inequality and Public Policy (New York, Basic Books, 1975); Barry Gross (ed.) Reverse Discrimination (New York, Prometheus Books, 1977)
60. Ollerearnshaw suggests:

'A number of local authorities have developed the concept of "targets" as a means of ensuring that the process of equal opportunity development is related to the proportions of ethnic minorities in their population. Although under the Race Relations Act quotas are illegal, some local authorities have used

the comparison between the low percentage of black employees in their work force with that in the local population as a base from which to urge that more black employees should be recruited to the organisation, as long as this can be done by legal means, and have adopted targets for this purpose.'

Susan Ollerearnshaw, 'The Promotion of Employment Equality in Britain' in Nathan Glazer and Ken Young (eds) Ethnic Pluralism and Public Policy (London, Heinemann, 1983) p.157. Hackney Borough Council set itself a target in 1982 of employing 30% coloured people, so that the work force would 'broadly reflect the community which it seeks to serve'. See The Daily Telegraph 19/1/1984.

61. Nick Jewson and David Mason, 'Equal Opportunities policies at the workplace and the concept of monitoring' in New Community Vol. XII, No.1, Winter 1984-5, pp.124-36.
62. Commission for Racial Equality, Equal Opportunity in Employment - Why Positive Action? (London, HMSO, 1980); also Equal Opportunity in Employment - A Guide for Employers (London, HMSO, 1983) and Monitoring an Equal Opportunity Policy - A Guide for Employers (London, HMSO, 1984).
63. Chapter Four, reference 69.
64. Lord Scarman; Chapter Three, reference 82.
65. Lord Scarman; Ibid. reference 83. The Times, in an editorial commented on Lord Scarman:

'He quotes that if the balance is to be redressed, "as it must be", positive discrimination is

required. But it is not clear whether he is content that positive discrimination should take the form of spending programmes for identified areas or categories of citizen, which is the form it has taken up to now; or whether he is among those who think it should be extended to positive discrimination between individuals on the basis of colour, in such matters as recruitment, promotion and educational selection, which is likely to be both more effective and more widely resented.' See The Times 26/11/1981.

For a review of some of the confusion about Lord Scarman's intentions in this matter, see Ronald Dworkin, 'Let's give blacks a head start' in The Times 12/12/1981, and Usha Prashar, 'The need for positive action' in John Benyon (ed.) Scarman and After (Oxford, Pergamon, 1984) pp.207-219.

66. Chapter One, reference 122.
67. For support of this interpretation, see Nick Jewson and David Mason, op. cit. The authors suggest that many policy makers view proportionate racial equality as evidence of the occurrence of equal opportunity. Bindman, op. cit. argues that policy should try to produce proportionate racial equality.
68. Lord Scarman, The Brixton Disorders, op. cit. 5.13.
69. Bindman, op. cit. quotes from an American Equal Opportunity Commission which illustrates this assumption:

'If a statistical survey shows that minorities and females are not participating in your work force at all levels in reasonable relation to their presence in the population and the labour force, the burden

of proof is on you to show that this is not the result of discrimination, however inadvertent...'

Affirmative Action and Equal Employment January 1974, Vol.1, p.1. See also Anthony Flew, The Politics of Procrustes (London, Temple Smith, 1981) p.48.

70. West Indian Children in Our Schools, Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the education of children from ethnic minority groups (The Rampton Report), by the Department of Education and Science. (London, HMSO, 1981). Sally Tomlinson, Ethnic Minorities in British Schools (London, Heinemann, 1983), especially chapters IV and V; Bhikhu Parekh, 'The Education Maze' in New Society 21/8/1987, p.26.
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72. Hadley Arkes, The Philosopher in the City (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981) p.248.

Chapter Nine: Pluralism

I

The settlement in Britain of coloured immigrants from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan and their descendants raised questions about the relationship of these immigrants with the host society. Were the new black Britons to be encouraged to become as much like the indigenous population as possible, or should they retain their own culture and religion and live separately from both the white British and other immigrant groups? Did the solution lie somewhere between these approaches? It is possible to discern three broad alternatives in this area: assimilation, integration and pluralism.¹ It was the theory of pluralism in society which attracted most attention, and for that reason, the theory of pluralism is dealt with in most detail in the discussion which follows.

Government policy towards coloured immigration to Britain in the 1950s and early 1960s was largely one of laissez faire. Little was done by either central or local government to aid the settlement of immigrants. In retrospect, this absence of action can be seen to have been based upon a theory of expected assimilation. The assumption was that black Britons would adapt to the culture and customs of the indigenous population, so that eventually skin colour would be their only distinguishing feature. Assimilation meant that the minority of coloured immigrants would conform to the majority white British

culture.

The assimilation approach was paralleled and overlapped by an appeal for "integration". Assimilation policies were mono-cultural and mono-racial in emphasis. The individuality of black Britons was expected to be subjugated to majority white British culture, religion and beliefs. The emphasis of integration, however, was on equal opportunity, a competitive individualistic ideal, but one within a framework of tolerance. Integration policies would lead, it was hoped, to a multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural society; none would be hindered by their race or culture, all would be treated equally by each other and the law. The first race relations body inspired by central government, the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Committee (CIAC) was set up to advise the Home Secretary about the 'integration of immigrants into the community'.² The CIAC was, however, also charged with an investigation of how local authorities had helped immigrants to 'adapt themselves to British habits and customs'.³ Assimilation was also its policy in the area of education; the CIAC's first report firmly eschewed pluralist policies, arguing that a national system of education should try to produce children who could easily fit into society, rather than children who reflected the different values of other minority racial groups.⁴

The debates on what became the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act show speakers using the terms "assimilation" and "integration" interchangeably, without

apparent distinction.⁵ The integration approach was to gain particular prominence in the mid-1960s, when Roy Jenkins, Labour's Home Secretary, gave integration a definition, which became widely adopted. He saw integration not as 'a flattening process of assimilation' but as 'equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of tolerance'.⁶

The integrationist approach gradually gave way in the late 1960s to an emphasis on pluralist policy, although the older vocabulary was still in use. Professor Crick, commenting on the 1969 report Colour and Citizenship, remarked that it had 'reached pluralistic conclusions but when the research was begun assimilation was still in the air'.⁷ Roy Jenkins, for example, was still using the term integration and defining it as he had in 1966, during the discussions of the 1976 Race Relations Act, when pluralistic ideas were clearly dominant. Pluralist policy emphasised racial and cultural group identity, and encouraged membership of such groupings. Society was envisaged as a mosaic of groups living in harmony, with individual group members being free to practise their own culture so long as this did not harm others.

The 1968-69 and 1969-70 reports of the CRC provide a useful indication of how policy in the area of race was moving to a more pluralistic stance at that time. The 1968-69 report suggested that there was an increasing tendency to view immigration in a new light: initially, the focus had been on the problems of black Britons in settling

into a society which did not welcome them greatly; now the emphasis was moving towards the need for the indigenous population to interact with black British groups in a society which was already multi-racial. The change in title from the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants to the Community Relations Commission was felt to be indicative of the new, wider scope of the body in dealing with the community at large.⁸

Policy at this point became aware of a potential problem in which separate group identity might lead to separatist policies, such as South African apartheid. The liberal pluralist ideal desires pluralism but not separatism.⁹ The CRC's report for 1969-70 illustrated its concern over this issue, acknowledging that any society which was multi-racial would tend to have groups focused around culture and nationality. However, it was concerned that black Britons might form themselves into enclosed groups which did not participate fully in British society.¹⁰

The Liberal Party strongly supported the pluralist ideal, as shown by the 1973 document Forward with the Liberals. This affirmed that the ultimate aim for Britain should be cultural pluralism, in which groups could maintain their own culture and tradition so long as this did not 'dislocate the common functioning of society'.¹¹ The major Liberal report on race, produced in 1974, also emphasised its support for a plural society, rejecting both policies of assimilation and separatism in favour of cultural pluralism, which it defined in some detail. What was

desired was a situation in which the black Briton was free to live in his own group or to participate in British society; it was important that the culture of immigrant groups endured. The report wanted the ideal of pluralism to be accepted throughout Britain, and particularly by those who had frequent contact with black Britons, such as teachers, social workers and the police.¹² During the debates on the 1982 British Nationality Act, Mr Tilley, who concluded the debate for the Labour Party, attacked the Conservatives for having missed the opportunity of stressing the benefit of ethnic and cultural variety, and instead viewing racial differences as a problem.¹³

The churches were generally strongly attracted by the concept of a plural society, in spite of having, presumably, most to gain from a Christian homogenous society in Britain.¹⁴ The Bishop of Coventry, during the debates on the 1971 Commonwealth Act, said that many people were unhappy about the presence of black Britons and would be content to see them asked to leave Britain; in his view, however, Britain was renowned for accepting other races and deriving great benefits from them.¹⁵ In 1976 the British Council of Churches acknowledged that Britain was a pluralist society consisting of a diversity of cultures which should be respected since a diverse society offered all members increased opportunities.¹⁶

Numerous examples of pluralist policies can be seen in the area of race; the Hunt Report of 1967 offers a clear illustration. One of the issues examined by the Report was

state-funded youth clubs in areas where black Britons were of concentrated; it was found that these youth clubs often attracted an all-white or all-black membership. Should the state fund such "separate but equal" arrangements? The Report suggested in fact that 'separate provision' for different racial groups was acceptable as long as no colour bar existed and membership was open to all races.¹⁷

The emphasis reviewed in Chapter Eight on meeting the special needs of black Britons through special provisions has contributed to the pluralist ethos. The Urban Programme directed both money and resources towards areas of high immigrant concentration, but lessened the racial aspects of this provision by emphasising that aid was for all within defined geographical areas. It is generally agreed, however, that such policies originated from concern for racial disadvantage and have continued to be directed chiefly towards such concerns. Appeals for "positive action", "positive discrimination" and "reverse discrimination" which have, as was suggested in the previous chapter, played an increasingly prominent part in discussion, have all contributed to the advocacy of a group-based society. When racial groups are singled out for special help then group membership becomes an important factor in defining the place of the individual in society. Similarly, the Race Relations Acts tend to emphasise race and racial group membership, and indeed, as was argued in the preceding chapter, tend to treat members of different racial groups differently. Particular policies also tend

to emphasise racial group membership: the Motor Cycles Helmet (Religious Exemptions) Act 1976 exempts Sikhs from the requirement to wear crash helmets, for example. This exemption is, as the title of the Act suggests, based upon religious rather than racial, grounds. Nonetheless, group identity is both acknowledged and fostered by such legislation.

The developing concern over multi-cultural education has produced a considerable quantity of literature on the subject, and changes in educational curricula.¹⁸ Questions raised by this concern include whether United Kingdom history is to be the major historical topic for students, or whether it should be combined with, or replaced by, the history of the countries from which the New Commonwealth immigrants have predominantly come. Similarly, questions have arisen over the teaching of French and German languages as opposed, for example, to Urdu and Creole. Religious education has also been the subject of much debate in schools where Christianity is no longer the predominant faith.

A language of group identity has arisen, using terms such as "black youth", "black studies" and "black consciousness". A government-financed body has argued that black children needing foster parents should be placed only in families of their own culture and ethnic origin.¹⁹ The British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering have suggested that black British children should only be adopted by black British parents, in place of the current practice of

adoption mainly by white families. The authors of the report suggested that in general, black children who had been adopted by white families seemed quite content, but that they:

'did not, however, see themselves as black or show real signs of having developed a sense of racial identity. The children, while not directly denying their racial background, perceived themselves as white in all but skin colour.'²⁰

The Commission for Racial Equality, in its 1970 Annual Report, called for the setting up of a black civil rights movement to represent black voters.²¹ The Labour Party has for several years debated the advisability of having a separate black section or group.²² Some local authorities have also contributed to these developments: the West Midland County Council has given special financial support to small businesses owned by black Britons.²³

The evidence outlined above suggests that discussion of racial issues has moved increasingly towards a pluralist concept of society. Nevertheless, it is not easy to define this idea of pluralism precisely. It is a concept which has developed over a number of years to meet particular and varying needs, and means different things to different people. In general, however, the pluralist position features three underlying principles:

- (1) A plural society is one of diverse racial groupings and has a genuine unity based on mutual respect
- (2) A plural society should welcome group diversity unless society is harmed by such diversity

(3) A plural society is richer than a homogenous society.

These claims are discussed below.

II

A plural society is a society of diverse racial groupings which has a genuine unity based on mutual respect.

Britain has always been a plural society in certain respects; the geographical nature of the United Kingdom together with past phases of invasion and immigration have ensured that this is so. Yet Britain has traditionally been viewed as a homogenous country.²⁴ This traditional view has been challenged by the influx of immigrants from the New Commonwealth, and the development of an explicitly pluralist model for British society. It would appear that the arrival of New Commonwealth immigrants has prompted a different response from that which greeted waves of immigration of, for example, Huguenots or Irish. New Commonwealth immigration has led to the development of a pluralist model of British society; previous, white, immigrants were expected to assimilate with the indigenous culture, as indeed, were New Commonwealth immigrants initially.

Recently, there has been a tendency to conflate cultural characteristics and skin colour and to minimise the distinctions between different racial groupings. This can be seen in the diversity of expressions by which the membership of racial groups has been identified. A Liberal

Party document of 1973 refers to 'a nation of multi-racial communities'.²⁵ James Callaghan referred in 1968 to 'a multi-racial society... diverse in culture'.²⁶ In 1976 Roy Jenkins referred to 'Britain's racial minorities'²⁷ and the Bishop of Worcester alluded to 'the minority ethnic groups'.²⁸ The Commission for Racial Equality in 1981 referred to 'black minorities'.²⁹ The 1976 Race Relations Act specifically defined 'racial groups' in terms of colour, race, nationality, ethnicity and national origin.³⁰

In spite of this diversity of description, there is an assumption that groups based on recognisable criteria have a basic unity, or that this unity can be created. However, although frequent reference is made to racial characteristics, talk of race is misleading. What might be meant by racial diversity is somewhat obscure. The 1976 Race Relations Act does define racial groups in terms of race, colour, ethnic origin and nationality, but it is not easy to see how these attributes per se can contribute to any society. More importantly, the major defence of pluralism rests on the assumption that differences in colour are a measure of cultural differences. Defence of racial pluralism is actually a defence of cultural pluralism or cultural diversity.³¹

There has also been an assumption that recognisable racial groupings have a basic unity which, with effort, can be strengthened. This plural model envisages a society diverse in many ways but united and bound together by mutually-agreed principles. The model assumes that both

black and white Britons share the same views on basic values and the same view of the good society. This contention must be seen in the light of the evidence reviewed in Chapter Five, which indicated a strong hostility on the part of the majority of the indigenous population towards the creation of a plural society.³² Some of the evidence cited earlier in this chapter acknowledges this hostility, by reference to the "challenge" and "need" to "create" a plural society. A change in national values, organisation and outlook is being called for, against resistance to such a change. This disparity between the views of supporters of the plural ideal and the majority of the indigenous population of Britain, is a difference of opinion on the ideas and values which unite society. At issue are differing concepts of an ideal society. It is not evident, however, that the pluralist model can deal with such disputes. The pluralist model respects and tolerates group diversity, and on this basis the resistance of the majority of the indigenous population to New Commonwealth immigration should be seen as a reflection of legitimate cultural aspirations. If this indigenous group does not wish to give citizenship to large numbers of immigrants, and if a large number of this indigenous group favour the repatriation of immigrants and their descendants, this presents problems for the pluralist model.

Two possibilities present themselves in such a situation: one is to deny access to Britain of immigrant groups, the

other is to welcome them and largely disregard the views of the majority of the indigenous group. The plural model, however, requires respectful tolerance of all groups, and these groups clearly have irreconcilable differences. The liberal pluralist dilemma lies in the attempt to respect the views of a majority group whilst nevertheless largely overriding these views. Equally, any minority group which challenges the pluralist ideal will present a moral dilemma. The pluralist model requires and assumes an initial consensus of shared values, and pluralist policy recommendations are predicated upon the existence of such a consensus.³³ Differences are to occur, it is implied, only within a consensual framework. The model is not capable of dealing with fundamental issues such as disputes over citizenship, or the foundation of a plural society in the first place.

The nature of politics also poses a problem. Politics can be defined as the resolution of conflict. In a group-based society where divisions are based on recognisable skin colour differences, and cultural differences, and where such views are likely to be strongly held, it is improbable that major issues can be resolved in a pluralist manner. Where disputes are about group-derived principles, deeply-held beliefs, ideals of citizenship and of the perfect society, it is unlikely that the consensus which the pluralist model requires will be found. Indeed, the more diverse and plural the society, the less likely are any disputes to be resolved in a consensual manner.

Northern Ireland provides a striking example of a plural society where major issues cannot be reconciled in a consensual way. Those pressing the plural model may have difficulty, for example, in supporting their views against those who desire a more homogenous society. If pluralism is to be taken seriously, support for pluralism must be seen as the belief of one or more groups' members competing with the views of other groups. It is not clear how beliefs can be evaluated in the plural model if they are simply viewed as the cultural preferences of one particular group or groups. So while there may be conflict in a plural society, there may be little resolution whilst the principles of pluralism are adhered to strongly. It seems that a culturally plural society may be incapable of achieving a common view or a common good, since any viewpoint must be seen as one possible belief amongst others.³⁴ Only if there is substantial agreement among many citizens in a plural society on an issue (itself unlikely, given a plurality of values) could there be a common good. Consequently, the establishment of a plural, multi-racial, multi-cultural society in the face of a majority group's hostility cannot be achieved within the terms of the pluralist model.

Whilst pluralism favours cultural diversity, it requires mutually-agreed basic principles. There is an absolutism about the basic values necessary to create the initial consensus on pluralism together with a tolerance of diversity not considered essential. However, this initial

assumption of unity makes pluralism unnecessary, since if there is agreement about the basic framework and arrangement of society, pluralism becomes unimportant. Pluralism, then is only to operate in those cultural areas which are not considered essential, such as dress, food or religion.

III

A plural society should welcome group diversity unless society is harmed by such diversity.

The plural society encourages the cultural diversity of groups; members of different groups are encouraged to maintain their own culture, identity and unity. This encouragement of diversity raises the question of whether or not there might be a limit to such diversity. Plainly, there must be a limit, for at some point the value of variety will conflict with other valued principles. To take an extreme example, a culturally-derived practice of human sacrifice of outsiders would clearly be rejected by other groups. When the activities of one group impinge on another in a harmful way, then this, it may be assumed, is the limit of cultural diversity in a plural society. The major issue then is to determine a definition of "harm" in a plural society.

What, in any given social context constitutes harm, is evidently a matter of some controversy. Debates on control of homosexual practice and pornography illustrate the diverse nature of judgements of "harm" in society.³⁵ In

many respects, judgement of what is considered harmful to society depends on an agreed consensus within society. As one writer has suggested, 'What is regarded as harmful depends upon the common values of the community and the ideal patterns of life cherished by it'.³⁶ Definition of harm in society arouses controversy in all societies, and presents particular problems to a plural society. A plural society consisting of various groups, each with its own culture, has many allegiances and sensibilities to offend. What might appear trivial to an outsider can assume vital importance to a member of society: in Northern Ireland, for example, the very naming of "Londonderry" or "Derry" denotes political and religious stances and considerable controversy. The likelihood of members of one group feeling themselves harmed because of the activities of another is much greater in a plural society than in a homogenous one. White Britons may believe, as was suggested in Chapter Five, that large-scale immigration from the New Commonwealth is harmful in itself; black Britons may believe that the basic structure of British society works against their favour, and find that structure harmful.

This issue can be illustrated by a number of cultural practices. Should black Britons be allowed to practise polygamy? Should female circumcision be available to those who want it? Should those of Asian origin be encouraged to treat women in a way that western women find "sexist"? Should Rastafarians claiming that cannabis smoking is a

religious practice be allowed to smoke this (presently illegal) drug? Should Moslems be given the opportunity during working hours to pray to Mecca if this disrupts normal work schedules? Should Christians be able to enforce Sunday trading laws? Should Shebeens, illegal unlicensed gambling, drinking and drug-taking clubs, be encouraged on the grounds that they are part of the Caribbean culture? Should Moslem girls be segregated from male pupils in mixed sex state schools? Should the death penalty for murder, part of Jamaican culture, be encouraged in Britain? Should the hostility of the National Front's supporters to black Britons be fostered since it can be argued to be a manifestation of a group's culture? Should Asians be able to slaughter animals in ways which many white Britons consider cruel? Should a persuasive educational campaign be directed towards the white British group when their views can be seen to be derived from their group culture? Should jokes at the expense of racial or national characteristics be allowed?

All these practices, and many others, can be viewed as culturally-derived diversity and yet they give rise to many problems. Some are presently illegal, others conflict with white British traditional values. Unlimited diversity, it can be concluded, is not the ideal of a plural society; limits have to be set. Achieving a consensus on these limits is made more difficult, as was suggested in Chapter Six, by social determinist thinking. It is unclear how social practices can be judged harmful in a diverse society

consisting of socially determined members. Ideas of what is harmful are presumably the result of the influences of the environment on the individual; in a plural society, group culture adds to this influence. This argument implies relativity of social thought: members of one social group believe something is harmful or beneficial because their group culture believes it to be so. Members of another group may not support their view for the same reasons. A Moslem may favour values which view wives as the housebound, obedient property of their husbands; western feminism may be regarded by Moslems as a threat to their values and way of life. It is difficult in a plural society to adjudicate between competing group views. Adjudication is made even harder when the views of minority groups clash against each other. When Moslems disapprove of homosexual practice, which minority group should be supported? Traditionally, British practice has relied upon the concept of a reasonable man, notionally on a Clapham omnibus, to act as a litmus test of harm and offence. Reasonable men in a plural society, however, are unlikely to have a coherent and consistent view of what constitutes offence. Whilst the plural society exists, group members will be differently shaped by their experience of their social environments, and consensus on harmfulness is as difficult to achieve as any other.

Agreement on social practices might be reached by bargaining, a compromise over certain cultural practices until a consensus was reached. The question of relative

power between groups would also arise. It is unlikely, however, that this consensus would be the diverse society originally intended; rather, it would be a homogenous society based on a set of compromises. This would both limit diversity and depend upon the strength of conviction with which cultural practices were upheld. It is difficult to see how a plural society can remain plural and yet deal effectively with genuine, deeply-felt diversity. Judgement on what is harmful must rest upon a consensus, and whilst pluralism does not create this consensus, it assumes that it already exists.

Whilst pluralism encourages cultural variety and diversity, it requires that the individual does not care too strongly about his cultural preferences. If he does, and those preferences conflict with those of others, he is unlikely to be tolerant. If, however, the individual does not support his preferences strongly, the diversity he represents will not withstand much pressure from the views of others, and will not survive. His weak support would be replaced by bland, tolerant indifference.

IV

A plural society is richer than a homogenous society.

Perhaps the most common argument and justification for the plural society has been that a diversity of culture will produce a richer society. The mixing of religious, cultural and racial groups, it has been argued, will enrich

the whole of society. Britain, before the start of immigration from the New Commonwealth, it is implied, was dull.³⁷

Roy Jenkins, speaking for the Labour Party during the discussion of the 1971 Commonwealth Immigration Bill, rejected Enoch Powell's view that black Britons would form unassimilable concentrations in the English cities. Jenkins argued that immigrants to Britain in the past had pushed Britain out of its insular sluggishness, and that no institution could be pre-eminent if it drew solely on its own racial grouping.³⁸ Church leaders argued similarly, and seemed particularly keen to stress this point. Bishop Woods spoke for the Established Church during the debate on the 1976 Race Relations Bill, and said that the cultures of black Britons were beneficial to the host community, bringing with them more variety and interest.³⁹ The Archbishop of Canterbury in his 1976 Christmas Day sermon said that the new immigrants brought enrichment with them, and that if this enriching quality were recognised, racial hostility would be much reduced.⁴⁰ During the debates on the 1971 Commonwealth Immigration Act, the Bishop of Coventry spoke of the need to emphasise the positive side of immigration, that of creating a 'multi-cultural, multi-racial family vibrant with life and rich with many-sided culture'.⁴¹

In its 1966 Report, the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants confirmed that its business was to make a new society, 'enriched rather than disturbed' by the

presence of immigrants.⁴² Michael Winstanley, speaking for the Liberal Party in 1968, suggested that it was a strength of Britain that the nation consisted of a variety of groups, each group contributing something of value to the whole.⁴³ A Labour Party document, Labour Against Racism, published in the mid-1970s, emphasised that without the immigrant population, many public services would be unable to operate, and welcomed the wider choice of restaurants and foods now available.⁴⁴ This utilitarian argument was considered in some detail in Chapter Seven above; the implications of this argument for pluralism are considered here.

It is clear that the idea of an underlying consensus referred to earlier runs through this argument also; whilst diversity of culture is seen as a good thing, the evidence above suggests that this diversity is to be carefully controlled. The plural society is one whose members experience cultural diversity in a relaxed manner. There is an inherent presumption of harmony, and that diversity can be experienced in a tolerant and mutually beneficial manner. It is plain that there must be a clash of cultures, since groups have to exist separately and differently for there to be enrichment. The assumption is that this is a society where it is challenging for cultures to interact and clash with each other, and that social progress is made by such interaction. Yet underlying this is the assumption of consensual harmony, that all will be appreciated, understood and enriched by every group.

The concept of "enrichment" is, however, not detailed. It is not clear, for example, how a black Pentecostalist is enriched by the existence of mosques, or how western feminists can be enriched by Moslem attitudes to women, or how liberals might be enriched by Powellites. Whilst cultural enrichment is celebrated, here, paradoxically the plural society seems indiscriminate about culture. On the one hand, the plural model places heavy emphasis on group culture and celebrates cultural diversity, but on the other, it appears to assume that all cultures are equally valuable and beneficial. There is little or no evidence of any desire to evaluate or discriminate between cultures. Yet given the diversity of cultures, it is unlikely that all can be beneficial, and a critical evaluation is called for. It seems that in practice, the cultural diversity brought by New Commonwealth immigrants to Britain is simply, and wholly welcomed, without such critical appraisal.

The pluralist model makes few judgements on competing life styles and cultures. Again, there is an assumption of consensus, and group cultures are assumed to be of equal merit and equally capable of contributing to the plural model. Group cultures must, however, differ from each other, and are encouraged to do so by the plural society. One group's culture may be individualistic, hardworking, competitive and secular, but another may be less competitive, group-oriented and religious. The plural society appears to make no critical evaluation of these

very different cultures. It is difficult to know what criteria could be used in such an evaluation by a plural society, since opinions of social good are likely to vary with group membership.

The make-up of the plural society may also inhibit enrichment. Groups in a plural society should agree on the basic principles of society, but go their separate ways in cultural, religious and other matters. But it is these very areas which the plural model encourages to keep separate and distinctive, which are to be the source of enrichment. Who is likely to be enriched by such diversity? It is unlikely to be the individual strongly committed to his own group identity, and the weak group-member who assimilates the views of others gives little in exchange. The Moslem fundamentalist, the black Pentecostalist, the liberal and the Powellite, for example, are unlikely to feel themselves enriched by each other's existence. The person strongly attached to his group identity is unlikely to benefit by social diversity if he does not value the culture of other groups.

The person whom the plural arrangement most favours is the consensual, tolerant, bland, culturally neutral person who holds few preferences strongly. Such a person can move through group society tasting alternative cultures and religions everywhere, happy to attend a cathedral, mosque or a Pentecostal church in succession.⁴⁵ It is those who do not hold religious or cultural preferences very strongly who enjoy the full diversity of plural society, not those

who have deeply-held convictions. The greater the number of those lacking strong group commitment in a plural society, the less plural that society will be. The argument for enrichment benefits most the cosmopolitan non-group members who would unconsciously weaken the diversity of a plural society.

Another assumption of the pluralist model is that members are self-interested: they recognise that they can benefit or be enriched by the plural society and conversely will lose by the existence of a homogenous society. This has interesting consequences for the pluralist model. Pluralism requires consensus, tolerance, commitment to inter-group harmony. Encouragement of self-interest in the members of a plural society, however, is likely to work against this tolerant consensus, for selfish people are unlikely to produce harmony and consensus. Instead, selfishness, individualism and inter-group competition are likely to result. This is evidently not the desire of supporters of pluralism, but once self-interest is appealed to, it is a possible result. The plural model requires a prior commitment to other values before full-bodied self-interest. Otherwise, justification of plurality by appeals to self-interest are likely to undermine the values which a plural society rests upon.

It is not clear that the outcome of a genuinely plural society, embodying varied racial culture and religion, will be a richer society. At least three outcomes appear possible. A varied society may lead to a vigorous, healthy

society; a society whose members are anxious to sample a variety of cultures and religions, to find the best synthesis for themselves. A second possibility is that such a society will produce a nation where separation, segregation, division and antagonism exist; a society where all feel offended and "harmed" by others. In this instance, members of each group resent the race, culture and religion of other groups and discriminate against each other on group criteria. A third possibility is a society whose members are not enriched by diversity; no-one, and no particularly group, is enriched, or particularly offended by the beliefs of others, since no-one cares very deeply. All cultures and religions are seen as matters of personal choice, equally valid and legitimate, worthy of equal respect; none are worth arguing over. The ethos of such a society is that everyone should do whatever pleases them most.⁴⁶

Whilst the first possible outcome is that expected by the supporters of plural policies, there is little to justify their expectation. This outcome is likely only if all groups agree the liberal viewpoint of what is acceptable and desirable. Such agreement would, however, undermine the continuation of plural diversity.

Finally, the plural society would appear to be a transitory phenomenon. If it were to work in the area of race, then after a few generations, a homogenous society would reappear. Members of differing groups would be enriched by the beliefs and practices of other groups,

embracing those practices and adapting them for themselves.
The result would be the disappearance of a plural society,
and the reappearance of a homogenous society in its place.

Pluralism: References

1. For an account of the development of policies of assimilation, integration and pluralism in race politics, see Sheila Patterson, Immigration and Race Relations in Britain 1960-67 (Oxford, OUP, 1969) chapter four. A useful review of the development of these policies relating to education appears in chapter two of Sally Tomlinson's Ethnic Minorities in British Schools (London, Heinemann, 1983). See also T.B. Rees, 'Accommodation, integration, cultural pluralism and assimilation: their place in equilibrium theories of society' in Race Vol.XI, 4, 1970, pp.481-491; Oliver Cox, 'The Question of Pluralism' in Race Vol. XII, 4, 1971, pp.385-400.
2. Chapter Three, reference 4.
3. Ibid. reference 5.
4. Ibid. reference 8.
5. See for example Conservative Home Secretary R.A. Butler's speech introducing the Bill at its Second reading, in Hansard, Vol. 649 Col. 644-6.
6. Roy Jenkins (Chapter One, reference 38). This definition of integration has not been accepted without criticism; see for example Dilip Hiro, Black British White British (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971) p.323; Chris Mullard, 'Multi-Racial Education in Britain: from Assimilation to Cultural Pluralism' in J. Tierney (ed.) Race, Migration and Schooling (London, Holt Rinehart and

Winston, 1982) pp.120-133.

7. Bernard Crick, 'The New Meaning of Tolerance' in The Observer 13/7/1969. In the light of later pluralist policy, the Labour Government's White Paper, Immigration from the Commonwealth (London, HMSO, Cmnd 2739) comment about immigrants and social services is interesting. The White Paper wanted to encourage immigrants to use the available social services but it suggested that 'it would be a mistake to build up any permanent form of special service for immigrants which would encourage and perpetuate separatism' (p.17, paragraph 70).
8. Chapter Three, reference 39.
9. See John Horton, 'Order and Conflict Theories of Social Problems as Competing Ideologies' in American Journal of Sociology, LXXXI, (17), 1965-6, pp.701-13; Sir Norman Anderson, Liberty, Law and Justice (London, Stevens and Sons, 1978) p.74.
10. Chapter Three, reference 40.
11. Chapter Two, reference 74.
12. Ibid. reference 78.
13. Chapter One, reference 117.
14. See Stephen Deakin, 'The Churches: Immigration and Race Relations' in New Community, Vol.XII, No.1, Winter 1984-85, pp.101-115.
15. Chapter Four, reference 61.
16. Ibid. reference 75.

17. Immigrants and the Youth Service, The Hunt Report (London, HMSO, 1967). See also Mary Dines, 'Pluralism: Promise or Threat?' in Race Today, 3,12, December 1971, pp.408-9.
18. See Tomlinson, op.cit.
19. Owen Gill and Barbara Jackson, Adoption and Race (London, Batsford, 1983).
20. See report in The Daily Telegraph 28/1/1983.
21. Commission for Racial Equality, Annual Report: 1980 (London, HMSO, 1981) p.33.
22. For a review of this issue, see Zig Layton-Henry, 'Immigration and Race Relations: Political Aspects No.11' in New Community Vol.XII, No.1, Winter 1984-5, pp.173-8.
23. See The Daily Telegraph 11/5/1983. Geoffrey Edge, Chairman of the Council's Economic Committee, supported the scheme since he felt that too few businesses were owned by black Britons in the West Midlands.
24. Michael Banton, Race Relations (London, Tavistock, 1967) p.369; Nathan Glazer, 'The Ethnic Factor' in Encounter Vol.LVII, No.1, July-December 1981, pp.6-15; Richard Rose, Politics in England (London, Faber and Faber, 1965) p.24; J. Blondel, Voters, Parties and Leaders (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969) chapter two in particular; Nicholas Deakin, 'Political Rights of Minority Groups' in New Community Vol.1, No.2, Spring 1972.

25. Chapter Two, reference 74.
26. Chapter One, reference 44.
27. Ibid. reference 101
28. Chapter Four, reference 65.
29. Chapter Three, reference 73.
30. 1976 Race Relations Act 5.3.1.
31. This seems to be acknowledged rarely; for a discussion of the difficulties of group identification, see Nathan Glazer, 'Ethnic groups and education: towards the tolerance of difference' in Journal of Negro Education, 38, 3, 1969, pp.187-195; Sandra Wallman, 'The Boundaries of Race: Processes of Ethnicity in England' in Man 13, 2, June 1978, pp.200-217.
32. Christopher Bagley, in The Dutch Plural Society (Oxford, OUP, 1973) p.245, writes:

'Britain is not a plural society, except in so far as immigrant minorities, such as Pakistanis, form coherent and discrete cultural groups. The evidence, however, suggests that both conformity and desire to be assimilated (e.g. by West Indians) and conformity and desire for integration - cultural co-existence and mutual tolerance - (e.g. by Pakistanis) are rejected by the majority of the British population.'
33. A good American example of this assumption of consensus forming a springboard for action is contained in Gunnar Myrdal's famous work, An American Dilemma (New York, Harper, 1944) pp.3-4:

'Americans of all national origins, classes, religions, creeds and colors, have something in

common: a social ethos, a political creed... When the American Creed is once detected the cacophony becomes a melody... as principles which ought to rule, the Creed has been made conscious to everyone in American society... America is continuously struggling for its soul. The cultural unity of the nation is sharing of both the consciousness of sin and the devotion to high ideals.'

A useful discussion of the assumption of consensus in the plural model appears in John Horton, op. cit. See also Jack Lively, 'Pluralism and Consensus' in Pierre Birnbaum, Jack Lively and Geraint Parry (eds), Democracy, Consensus and Social Contract (London, Sage, 1978); William Newman, American Pluralism (New York, Harper and Row, 1973) p.105. David Lockwood has written in 'Race, Conflict and Plural Society' in Sami Zubaida (ed.) Race and Racism (London, Tavistock, 1970) p.62, 'The idea of a plural society has been worked out in strict opposition to theories that postulate consensus on common values as a pre-requisite of social integration'. Sheila Allen, in 'Plural Society and Conflict', New Community Vol.5, Autumn 1972, pp.389-392 writes that:

'the assumption that cultural diversity is possible so long as it does not lead to social groups organised in such a way as to pose a threat to the existing order is essentially the ideological position of the liberal pluralist'.

In earlier times, this view was associated with conservative thought; Edmund Burke attacked Warren

Hastings' policies in India thus: 'If we are to undertake to govern the inhabitants of such a country we must govern them upon their own principles and maxims and not on ours'. Cited in B.W. Hill, Edmund Burke (London, Harvester Press, 1975) p.264. See also Bernard Crick, 'The Strange Death of the American Theory of Consensus' in Political Quarterly Vol.43, 1972, pp.46-59.

34. Leo Strauss, 'Epilogue' in Herbert Storing (ed.) Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics (New York, Holt Rinehart, 1962).
35. See the debate between Devlin and Hart about homosexual practice in Patrick Devlin, The Enforcement of Morals (Oxford, OUP, 1965) and H.L.A. Hart, Law, Liberty and Morality (Oxford, OUP, 1968). For a work on the matter of harm in pornography, see A.W.B. Simpson, Pornography and Politics (London, Waterlow, 1983)
36. J.R Lucas, The Principles of Politics (Oxford, Clarendon, 1966) p.173. Lucas suggests that 'intuitively the most obvious reason... why we should stop someone doing something is because he will harm others', Ibid. p.172. J.S Mill in On Liberty argues that 'The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community against his will, is to prevent harm to others', (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977) p.73.

37. An interesting example of this is contained in an article by Phillip Mason, once Director of the Institute for Race Relations, and associated with liberal views. Mason wrote that:
- 'There are some - and personally I am among them- who find it exciting and stimulating that in parts of London there should be foreign languages and strange faces in the street, that we should have so much wider a choice in food, music and clothes than sixty years ago. But I suspect the majority preferred a much more homogenous nation.'
- Phillip Mason, 'A Democratic Dilemma: Consensus and Leadership' in Race 4, 10, 1969, pp.493-504; p.495.
38. Chapter One, reference 82.
39. Chapter Four, reference 66.
40. Ibid. reference 67.
41. Ibid. reference 61.
42. Chapter Three, reference 23.
43. Chapter Two, reference 54.
44. Chapter One, reference 97.
45. 'Ironically the very people who extol groupism, whether as an inexorable necessity or as desirable in its own right, usually do not themselves lead parochial or "groupy" lives...'
- David Riesman, Individualism Reconsidered (New York, Free Press, 1954) p.33.
46. Cranston suggests there is little problem with religious tolerance in Britain since there is so little religious zeal. Maurice Cranston, 'Crick on Toleration' in Government and Opposition, 6, 1971, pp.208-210.

Chapter Ten: Community

I

The ideal of community has been much used in the liberal response to the politics of race: "community" and the practice of "community relations" have been presented as desirable goals. Unfortunately, the meaning attached to community in this area has been largely unexplained; the term has been used principally to describe the goal of liberal values and policies. The values identified in this study as being key ones in the response to race politics, that is a social determinist view of man, rationality, equality and pluralism, are understood here to have as their goal the idea of community. Close study of these arguments suggests that in several respects, the ideal of community is undermined by certain aspects of these values.

II

The word community, or similar terms, has been used freely. The Labour Government's 1965 White Paper Immigration from the Commonwealth, for example, affirmed the need for 'harmonious relations between different races who now form our community'.¹ The race relations body, the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigration, wrote of its work that it was 'bringing new ideas to bear on new situations, changing attitudes and infusing a new spirit into the community life'.² During the Second Reading of the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Bill, James Callaghan spoke of his

Party's commitment to 'a society in which all communities will have respect for each other'.³ The Liberal Party's document Forward with the Liberals in 1973 presented a policy for the 'long-term good for a nation of multi-racial communities'.⁴ In 1968 the Archbishop of Canterbury stressed the need for education to help 'our community... to know what is the contribution that some immigrant communities have been giving...'.⁵ Lord Scarman, following the Brixton riots, spoke of the need to involve 'not just black people, but all the community' in tackling the problems he had identified.⁶ During the debate on the 1976 Race Relations Act, Roy Jenkins argued that 'Racial discrimination and the disadvantages experienced by sections of the community are morally repugnant'⁷ and during the same debate, Liberal Alan Beith suggested that 'a time of national economic crisis is a testing time for the whole community. It puts severe pressure on minorities and their relationship with the majority community'.⁸ The Commission for Racial Equality wrote in 1980 that '...it is clear that many whites still do not accept blacks, even young blacks who were born here, as members of the community in the same way as themselves'.⁹

In spite of this widespread usage, the meaning of the term "community" is not explicit. This had been noted by some of those engaged in the debate: the Community Relations Commission, for example, referring in its 1972-73 Report to its own work, commented that 'its general function - to encourage the establishment of harmonious

community relations - has never been satisfactorily defined'.¹⁰ Perhaps the 1968 Race Relations Act gave the clearest definition, by defining community relations as 'relations within the community between people of different colour, race or ethnic or national origin'.¹¹ Such a meaning, however, still takes the term "community" for granted. The 1976 Race Relations Act gave the Commission for Racial Equality the task of promoting 'good relations between persons of different racial groups'.¹²

This general and somewhat broad usage presents difficulties in analysing the ideal of community in the politics of race. This difficulty is reflected in discussion of the use of "community" in other areas of social policy. For example, the sociologist Margaret Stacey has written that 'it is doubtful whether the concept "Community" refers to a useful abstraction'.¹³ It is Halsey's view of the concept of community that 'unfortunately it has so many meanings as to be meaningless'.¹⁴ One study reviewed 94 different definitions of community, and suggested that the only common feature among them was that they were concerned with people.¹⁵ Whilst doubt about the usefulness of the term "community" and its synonyms is acknowledged, difficulties of definition can, perhaps, be over-emphasised in British race politics. Close study of the way that the term has been used allows a reasonably clear image of its generally accepted meaning. Community in British social policy usually suggests social cohesion, unity, harmony, shared

values and geographical proximity.¹⁶ The arrival, in the face of widespread hostility, of large numbers of New Commonwealth immigrants, distinguishable from the indigenous population by racial, culture and religious characteristics, triggered the use of the term community in race politics. Community was then used to describe the indigenous white British population, the new black Britons, and sometimes both groups collectively. Community relations came to refer to relations between groups of differing racial, cultural and religious characteristics.

Community is a prescriptive term; it is an ideal which, at least until it is given specific content, gains almost universal acceptance.¹⁷ More than that, the word legitimises policy and policy goals. Whilst it has been common among liberals to refer, for example, to black British communities, reference is not made to the Powellite community or the National Front community. Certainly it would have been eccentric for an individual to claim during the period under discussion (1961-1981) that he was 'against community'. As mentioned above, community brings to mind warm human companionship, a sense of consensus, harmony, agreement and belonging. For two hundred years and more, social theorists in the western world have favoured ideals of community; often these ideals have been viewed as the antithesis of urban capitalistic society.¹⁸

In race politics, community has been a valuable legitimising concept, given the liberal assumptions of what constituted community and good race relations. White

Britons' hostility to New Commonwealth immigration and the creation of a multi-racial society (see Chapter Five above) made it unlikely that black Britons would readily be accepted as part of the existing community. This was sometimes acknowledged at the time: the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigration's report for 1965, for example, desired policies which would 'transform the present negative picture of a troubled society unable to cope with the concept of heterogeneity'.¹⁹ The ideal of community had then a commendatory meaning in race politics, suggesting wholeness and unity, a fundamental unity of identity and purpose amongst both black and white Britons. Indeed, the liberal concept of community seems best characterised by the word "harmony"; harmonious relations between black and white Britons were seen to be the key to the good community.

III

An interesting feature of the concept of community in race politics is that it has not been assumed to be a natural, inevitable occurrence: it has to be created and fostered. James Callaghan, speaking in 1968, said of the ideal of a multi-racial society that it 'will not happen of its own accord. It is something that has to be worked for. Our policies must establish the ends that we will'.²⁰ Speaking against the Commonwealth Immigration Act in the same year, the Archbishop of Canterbury stated that such a bill would harm community relations and that, 'in recent years we have

been discovering more and more that good community relations do not entirely look after themselves'.²¹ This view was shared by the Community Relations Council: 'Community relations do not take care of themselves. Urgent and positive policies are needed in all sections of British life'.²² The common claim that a clear example of leadership by governmental institutions, together with a persuasive educational campaign was needed to create good community relations also illustrates this theme.²³ The very existence of successive race relations bodies, the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council, the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants, the Race Relations Board, the Community Relations Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality, shows that community relations were not expected to be generated without assistance. The purpose of such bodies, reflecting over the years the changing requirements of both the immigrant groups and the host community, has been the creation, supervision and promotion of good community relations.

The achievement of community in race politics, it would appear, is not a natural and spontaneous product. Rather, it is a result of commitment, moral persuasion, education, leadership and the application of correct social policy by government. The idea that community and harmonious race relations must be created gives support to the view that it was recognised that the indigenous population did not welcome large-scale New Commonwealth immigration. If it were otherwise, there would have been no need to take

active steps to encourage a spirit of community. It is evident that one of the features of this idea of community is that it was understood that its fundamental values must be provided by political leaders and educated opinion. Liberal opinion formers appear to have recognised that the new ideal of community would not naturally spring from the majority of white Britons, given their hostility to large-scale immigration.

The creation of community espousing liberal values and goals reflects some of the assumptions about human behaviour identified in Chapter Six. The strong theme of social determinism apparent in liberal values views man as a malleable creature, susceptible to external influences. This understanding encourages the idea that leadership and education in "correct" values is required, and will be effective, in creating genuine community. Hence the liberal conception of community in race politics does not stem from loyalties generated freely by autonomous individuals, but from values of which individuals have to be persuaded.²⁴ This reflects the liberal assumption that New Commonwealth immigration to Britain, and the creation of a multi-racial society, was an entirely acceptable process and goal.²⁵ The majority of white Britons, however, did not share this view. The liberal ideal of a multi-racial community could not be derived from the freely-expressed values of the white British population; it had to be created.

The limited view of individual autonomy encouraged by

social determinist assumptions presents problems for this ideal of community. It is difficult to perceive how a vigorous, viable community could be created by people whose attitudes and behaviour were so strongly dictated by social circumstance. People whose autonomy and individuality can be overridden and moulded by tactics of persuasion are unlikely to be promising material for a good community. Those who are assumed to be unable to control or overcome their environment are more likely to be passive, mechanical and lacking in vitality; they might be expected to experience a sense of alienation rather than commitment to the values of a liberal, or indeed any, community.

Linked to this is the problem of achieving a sense of community. It was argued earlier that the key liberal values identified in this study, a social determinist view of man, rationality, equality and pluralism, have a common goal of harmonious community. However, it was argued in Chapter Six that in the social determinist view, values do not spring from the individual, but are the product of the environment and social experience. New values have to be given by a force outside the social sphere, otherwise they must be viewed as social determinist preferences themselves. This attitude produces an immediate division or inequality in the community between those who hold the "correct" values, and those who do not. Such a division inevitably strikes against any concept of community as a united, harmonious whole.

The appeal to utilitarian self-interest arguments raises

a number of issues for the ideal of community.²⁶ The argument, for example, that hostility against black Britons was fuelled by competition for scarce resources such as housing and jobs, implicitly challenges the idea of community. It downplays and disregards the existing sense of community in the indigenous population: it presents black Britons not as a challenge to traditional community values, but as a challenge to material progress and achievement. Presenting black Britons as competitors for scarce economic resources highlights their distinctiveness and their being outside the community; it shows them as being different and somehow competitors for something to which white Britons are entitled and they are not.²⁷

Much policy in the area of race politics has been materialistic in nature. Social determinist ideas emphasise the effect of the social environment on the individual, other policy argues that economic and cultural benefits were a natural result of immigration, and yet other policies view black Britons as competitors for scarce resources. Such emphasis on material gain, social shaping and competition seem to be unlikely components of a racially-harmonious community with a strong sense of unity and identity.

The argument that black Britons should be accepted by the indigenous population for reasons of self-interest, because they bring economic and cultural gain (see Chapters Seven and Nine) seems somewhat anomalous if harmonious community is the desired goal. Black Britons are welcomed in this

instance not for their intrinsic worth, but for what they can contribute; the newcomers become on this basis an implement for the use of the existing community rather than full members of it.²⁸ If white Britons view black Britons as being people whose main role is to be used for enrichment, whether financial or cultural, it is unlikely that black Britons will be viewed as fully-accepted equal members of a united community. Rather, they will remain outsiders, seen as "providers" rather than belonging to the community. Furthermore, the use of arguments of self-interest in appealing to white Britons suggests that they are highly susceptible to a profit motive and see life in terms of calculating profit and loss; such people are not naturally the sort to encourage a harmonious, co-operative community. Encouragement of self-interest would appear to be more likely to discourage harmony, and promote competitiveness rather than co-operative community.²⁹

Supporters of the free market often claim that a pursuit of self-interest ultimately benefits society as a whole.³⁰ However, both free-market protagonists and their critics generally agree that freedom to pursue self-interest also leads to inequalities: some will prosper more than others. In a homogenous society such inequalities may not matter too much, though the liberal tradition is strongly associated with egalitarian values. In a society of different racial groupings, where group identity is recognised and supported, the pursuit of economic self-interest commonly leads to discord. One racial group may

be more entrepreneurial than another and become wealthier, and this may lead to jealousy and a lack of harmony. It may even provoke discord still further by employing other groups as labour. The expulsion of East African Asians from Kenya in 1968 stemmed partly from this phenomenon, and there have been numerous instances elsewhere. This problem has not been acknowledged by those who assume that the interests of black and white Britons are naturally in close harmony. Harmonious community relations, with its implications of harmony of interests, could not be identified as a central goal of policy unless it was assumed that all the interests involved were basically reconcilable.³¹ This is a major assumption. for in many plural societies group interests are not reconcilable and are in the nature of non-bargainable disputes. At present, Northern Ireland is an example of this phenomenon.³² The emphasis on unity of interest in race politics has not been justified by the evidence of the unwillingness of the indigenous population to accept New Commonwealth immigration.

This emphasis on harmonious community, however, is a useful legitimising device, for it has a tendency to support the status quo, the established power structures. Conflict between different racial groupings, uncomfortable discussion, challenge of the accepted wisdom, is not encouraged. Instead, it is expected that all will work within the harmonious framework set out by liberal values.³³ White Britons are expected to tolerate the

existence of black Britons, and black Britons are expected to assimilate and accept the white British establishment's political culture. This is expected in spite of the plural emphasis in race politics which might give the opposite impression. The accommodation of black Britons, and white Britons who oppose moves towards a more plural society, becomes a matter of making small adjustments to the political framework. This feature of British race relations has received criticism: it has been suggested by some authorities that the grievances of black Britons have been deflected by channelling them into the liberal consensual framework alone,³⁴ whilst the views of white Britons, as this study has concluded, have been largely disregarded.³⁵ Achieving and maintaining an apparently harmonious consensus has been made easier by restricting public debate (see Chapter Seven). Public debate of the "wrong" kind, that is debate which challenged the liberal conception of community, was presented as being harmful to good community relations. Some opinions, Powellite opposition to immigration and black Britons, radical black Britons' charges that Britain is a racist society, were considered too dangerous to be discussed. Indeed, the assumption of harmony of interests itself acts to exclude opinions which do not fit this harmony.

A practical effect of the desire to promote good community relations via a consensual framework of mutual interests is that measures taken will generally be of a low-key nature.³⁶ To do otherwise might lead to discord

and arouse passions; this might explain in part the quiet way in which liberal opinion formers have generally dealt with race politics.³⁷ Given the hostility of white Britons to the creation of a multi-racial society and liberal support for such a society, there was an obvious appeal in the assumption that interests were reconcilable, harmonious and bargainable. Active politics in a divided society can divide people very deeply.³⁸

The emphasis on equality in race politics has interesting implications for the concept of community. The argument that black Britons suffer disadvantages from the structure of British society may hinder harmonious community. Those identified as disadvantaged may believe this so strongly that they feel alienated from the broader community and no longer give it support. Lord Scarman, in his report on the Brixton riots, suggested something similar when he identified the existence in Brixton and elsewhere of alienated young black Britons (see Chapter Three). It is also possible, however, that those identified as causing such inequalities may resent this and view the disadvantaged as merely those who will not join the community fully and compete for the social goods available.³⁹ In this, they would have the support of the heavy liberal emphasis on equal opportunity which encourages people to compete for social goods. Even if there is no resentment amongst those who are seen to be disadvantaged, the charge of poverty and "backwardness" may encourage white Britons to see such people as not truly

belonging to the community.⁴⁰

Equality of opportunity policies can be seen to have both a tendency to produce division, and to support the status quo. Equality of opportunity is a competitive individualistic ideal which pits people against each other. Rather than emphasising harmonious community, it encourages individuals to compete. In differentiating people on grounds of merit and encouraging competition between them, problems arise in a plural society. Unless all group cultures are identical (and this offends pluralist values), it is possible that members of one group will be more entrepreneurial and successful than those of another. Economic competition is likely to result in inequalities, and this is likely to produce community tension. It was suggested earlier, however (see Chapter Nine), that equal opportunity policies in race politics appear to make no recognition of cultural differences among racial groups. Banton has suggested that competition within a society between racial groups tends to damage harmony between them. He argues also that competition between individuals tends to break down barriers between racial groups.⁴¹ This argument, however, appears to take insufficient account of group culture, something stressed by liberals. If individuals of one group are by their cultural tradition less competitive, then whole groups will be characterised as winners and losers and stigmatised by their relative performance.

Some aspects of equality of opportunity support forms of

harmonious community, since the opportunities to compete do not exist in a vacuum. The opportunities available to the individual are to establish himself and become successful within the framework of an existing community, and therefore reflect the values and ideals held by that community.⁴² This poses a major problem, however, if the favoured community is a plural one since establishing consensual values in a plural society is difficult (see Chapter Nine). The opportunities desired by individuals may well be those that are valued by their own racial group and may differ from other groups. The liberal model's ideal is a tolerant society in which everyone competes in an orderly fashion for the material and social goods available. However, these ambitions may not be those of other groups, who may prefer other less tolerant or hedonistic values.

Support for policies of "positive action" designed to achieve more equality, particularly reverse and positive discrimination, differentiate members of different racial groups, in order to achieve, it was argued in Chapter Eight above, proportionate equality. It was suggested in Chapter Eight that the extent to which racial criteria should be the basis for different and favourable treatment has been left unclear. However, even if the criterion is "need" alone, if this need is concentrated in a racial group whose members are then allocated extra resources, this is likely to provoke discord and resentment by members of other racial groups.⁴³ This potential discord has been

recognised by race relations bodies and by opinion leaders in race politics. For example, the Race Relations Board tried to make a distinction between different and privileged, treatment of racial group members.⁴⁴ The Board acknowledged that its aims gave it the appearance of being a partisan organisation, and it wanted 'the widely held myth that the minorities constitute a privileged section of society' to be refuted.⁴⁵ Similarly, when the Urban Programme was initiated, opinion leaders were anxious to stress that the special help was directed towards geographical areas where need was concentrated rather than towards immigrants per se.⁴⁶ The cost of favouring one racial group will always be borne by other racial groups. If taxpayers in other groups have to pay extra to support a particular group, or if they miss opportunities because members of another group are being favoured, community relations will be put under strain.

The desire for a plural society poses perhaps the greatest difficulties for the idea of community, since community celebrates unity, whilst pluralism celebrates diversity.⁴⁷ A delicate balance is required in a plural society if inter-group harmony is to be either achieved or maintained. Members of a plural society are likely to feel more sense of loyalty to their own particular racial group than they are to the wider community.⁴⁸ Perversely, the singling out of racial groups as being especially disadvantaged and in need of help is likely to foster the identity of that group rather than the community. Race

Relations initiatives such as the Community Relations Commission's call in 1970 for a black Britons' civil rights movement encourage separate group identity.⁴⁹ One cost of such a programme is that any loyalty to the national community may be damaged, and loyalties towards such groups may be nurtured.

This division of loyalties is made more likely because of the apparent inability of plural society to foster a sense of "common" good.⁵⁰ The ideal of a plural society embraces moral diversity, cultural diversity and hence disagreement over the ends of policy and politics. To the extent that racial groups are allowed to be genuinely diverse, to that extent plural society will be made up of sub-communities based on each group's individual interests and conception of the common good. Pluralism must provide an underlying cohesion and unity if community is to work. This unity is not of religion, nor is it of culture or racial group identity. In a strictly plural society, this unity is perhaps a minimalist framework of individual laissez faire. It was suggested in Chapter Nine that pluralism might result in unity, discord or bland indifference: each is possible.

IV

The ideal of community has been applied to British race politics at a time when it was feared that discord and inter-racial group hostility might erupt. The concept has been used widely and varyingly, but its main application

has been as a legitimising device which stressed harmony, common interests and unity. However, several aspects of other key liberal values act to undermine or negate this conception of community. Social determinist explanations of behaviour do not provide the individual with the qualities necessary to build a community; restrictions on public debate in the name of rationality and good race relations inhibit the community from developing a sense of common purpose out of widespread discussion. Moreover, the unequal treatment of racial groups serves to separate groups from each other, whilst pluralism calls into question the concept of a united community. Perhaps these problems are inherent in the idea of community; they are, however, compounded in this case since the community in question is an artificial creation.

Comunity: References

1. Chapter One, reference 24.
2. Chapter Three, reference 19.
3. Chapter One, reference 44.
4. Chapter Two, reference 74.
5. Chapter Four, reference 56.
6. Chapter Three, reference 85.
7. Chapter One, reference 101.
8. Chapter Two, reference 83.
9. Chapter Three, reference 74.
10. Ibid. reference 56.
11. Ibid. reference 34.
12. Ibid. reference 69.
13. Margaret Stacey, 'The Myth of Community Studies' in British Journal of Sociology 20, 1969, pp.134-147.
14. A.H. Halsey, 'Government against poverty in school and community' in Dorothy Weddeburn (ed.) Poverty, Inequality and Class Structure (Cambridge, CUP, 1974) p.130.
15. George A. Hillery, 'Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement' in Rural Sociology 20, 1955, pp.111-123; see also Michael Hill and Ruth Issacharoff, Community Action and Race Relations (Oxford, OUP, 1971), chapter three.
16. For example, an exponent of community policing has written: 'Community should be seen as a group of people who live in sympathetic proximity with (to a greater or lesser degree) some significant factor in

common'. John Alderson, Policing Freedom (Plymouth, Macdonald and Evans, 1979) p.47.

A Government Report of 1968 suggested:

'The term "community" is usually understood to cover both the physical location and the common identity of a group of people... The feeling of identity which membership of a community bestows derives from common values, attitudes and ways of behaving which the members share and which form the rules which guide social behaviour within it.'

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18. Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision (London, Allen and Unwin, 1961) p.363.
19. Chapter Three, reference 21.
20. Chapter One, reference 44.
21. Chapter Four, reference 59.
22. Chapter Three, reference 55.
23. See Chapters Six and Seven.
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25. Jim Bulpitt, 'Continuity, Autonomy and Peripheralism: the Anatomy of the Centre's Race

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26. See Chapter Seven for discussion of utilitarianism in liberal race politics.
 27. Phillip Mason, 'The Colour Problem in Britain as it affects Africa and the Commonwealth' in African Affairs, Vol.58, No.231, April 1959, pp.110-122.
 28. See John Schaar, 'Some Ways of Thinking about Equality' in Journal of Politics, 26, 1964, pp.867-895.
 29. Plant, op.cit. p.105.
 30. See for example H.B. Acton, The Morals of the Market (London, Institute for Economic Affairs, Longman, 1971) pp.17-18.
 31. Catherine Jones, Immigration and Social Policy in Britain (London, Tavistock, 1977) pp.164-169.
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 33. John Horton, 'Order and Conflict Theories of Social Problems as Competing Ideologies' in American Journal of Sociology Vol. LXXXI, 1965-6, pp.701-713.
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- Spencer, 'The State, the Law and Race Relations in Britain Today', in Current Legal Problems, 31, 1979, pp.117-142.
35. See discussion in Chapter Seven and footnotes 31 and 32.
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37. See Frank Reeves, British Racial Discourse (Cambridge, CUP, 1983) and Jim Bulpitt, op.cit.
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41. Michael Banton, Promoting Racial Harmony (Cambridge, CUP, 1985) p.13.
42. See John Schaar, 'Equality of Opportunity and Beyond' in J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman (eds) Nomos IX, Equality (New York, Atherton, 1967) pp.228-249.
43. Lawrence Lustgarten, Legal Control of Racial Discrimination (London, Macmillan, 1980) p.20.
44. Chapter Three, reference 64.

45. Ibid.
46. See Chapter One, references 66 and 68; Chapter Two, references 55 and 56 and Chapter Four, reference 69.
47. Robert Nisbet, The Social Philosophers (London, Heinemann, 1974) p.7.
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